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"From each according to ability, to each according to need!"

Protests in September 2004 in the Free State town of Harrismith over the lack of service delivery by corrupt officials (taking their cue, perhaps from the corrupt fat-cat Members of Parliament implicated in the R17-million travel scandal?) saw the cops open fire on the demonstrators, killing Teboho Mkhonza, a 17-year-old youth. This murder sparked a series of anti-municipal riots in townships right across the Free State, the latest being in Phomolong in early April. It is important to note that in none of these uprisings have the radical social movements been present as instigators, which suggests that a new layer of the pissed-off poor is emerging. But the social movements need to engage with this layer to ensure coherence and continuity. We need to assist this layer, so that it does not burn itself out like its burning barricades, but so that we can spread our struggles for liberation like a bush-fire across the region. We need to build a new confidence in horizontally-organised self-managed working class resistance.



Picture: Julian Rademeyer

BEE-LLIONNAIRES IN MBEKI-STAN:

BEE DEBATE SHOWS NATURE OF POST-APARTHEID SA, AND LIMITS OF "LEFT" CRITIQUE

Recent debates in the press around the issue of "Black Economic Empowerment," or BEE, bring key features of the post-apartheid dispensation into stark relief. They also show the limits of much of what is considered to be "progressive" or left-wing politics in South Africa. BEE is about creating an elite of Black capitalists, something that underlines the class agenda of the ANC.

In the 1980s, the more radical layers of the anti-apartheid movement within South Africa believed that capitalism and apartheid were joined at the hip. Apartheid policies provided capitalism with a cheap, unfree, and racially structured working class; the capitalist profits that resulted, funded the development of a powerful and militarised local State. Many therefore thought that capitalism could not survive the abolition of apartheid.

APARTHEID AND CAPITALISM

This view was too simplistic. Apartheid policies benefited low-wage and low-skill sectors like mining and farming, but they were not useful for advanced sections of the manufacturing sector that grew dramatically from the 1940s onwards. By 1995, mining was only 10% of overall economic activity, with agriculture at 4.5%; manufacturing was nearly 40% of the whole economy.

Large manufacturing companies that relied on sophisticated machinery designed for mass production situations were constrained by the small local market and the under-skilled workforce. International pressures limited their ability to expand through exports. This meant a significant section of local capitalists WERE interested in a post-apartheid - and neoliberal - dispensation. Low wages would be guaranteed through the free market, rather than the heavy hand of the State. This type of view was expressed in books like *The Assault on Free Enterprise: the Freeway to Communism*, by A. D. Wassenaar, head of SANLAM.

"FRESH FIELDS FOR NON-EUROPEAN BOURGEOIS"

This shift converged with the pro-capitalist policies of the main national liberation movements. The ANC's *Freedom Charter* of 1955 called for the nationalisation of major industries, but **within** a capitalist framework. Mandela made it clear in 1956 in *Liberator* the Charter aimed at opening up "fresh fields for the development of a prosperous non-European bourgeois class" that will for the "first time... have the opportunity to own in their own



name and right, mines and factories, and trade and private enterprise will boom and flourish as never before."

It should be stressed that this statement was issued at the very same time as the ANC was forming an underground alliance with the SA Communist Party. The SACP did **not** object, as its strategic position stressed the need for a two-stage revolution in which a stage of "national democracy," non-racial capitalism with a "non-European bourgeois class" must precede any socialist transformation. On the need for a "national democratic stage," the ANC agreed - although it has no interest in a second stage.

The two-stage strategy is common enough amongst Communist Parties in the so-called "Third World," and generally involved postponing the struggle against capitalism in favour of a struggle for "national" capitalism against a vague "imperialism" by **multi-class** nationalist parties. Generally it has been a disaster, leading the left to drop its own politics. In some cases, the left has paid in blood for this mistake.

The ANC's position was no passing viewpoint: as Oliver **Tambo** said in 1985: *The Freedom Charter does not even purport to want to destroy the capitalist system. All that the Freedom Charter does is to envisage a mixed economy in which part of the economy, some of the industries would be controlled, owned by the*

state (as happens in many countries), and the rest by private ownership - a mixed economy.

Today the ANC has even dropped the "mixed economy," for neo-liberal "free markets."

TO BEE OR NOT TO BEE

The negotiations of the 1990s finally opened the "fresh fields" through BEE policies. For example:

★ The *Employment Equity Act* requires all companies to promote people of colour into top positions. Other Acts and "charters" stipulate companies must have BEE plans.

★ In the 1950s, *nationalisation* was seen as the route to BEE. In the 1990s, *privatisation* assumes that role. State corporations subcontract operations to small BEE companies - TELKOM claimed over 500 such contractors in 2004.

★ The National Empowerment Fund Trust is a State structure that receives up to 20% of shares of State companies being privatised. These are either sold to BEE ventures at a discount, or sold to raise venture capital for BEE.

★ The *Industrial Development Corporation* provides loans, advice and other support to emerging businesses - if they have a BEE component.

RIGHT, LEFT, RIGHT

BEE is fundamentally about creating an elite of Black capitalists. **It is no accidental that these policies enrich a few individuals whilst leaving ordinary Blacks poor** - that is the whole point. It does no good to pretend that BEE could be something else.

If the ANC were even a mildly reformist party of the working class, it would **try** and redistribute wealth and power downwards, to the popular classes. But because the ANC is a **capitalist party**, it focuses on promoting capitalism "as never before," with particular emphasis on creating the "fresh fields" for the "non-European bourgeois." Sometimes this clashes with ANC neo-liberalism, leading to policy contradictions

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THE PRESIDENT FROM THE SKIES vs. THE AUNTIE WHO SAYS "NO!"

The growth of new social movements in post-apartheid South Africa has attracted a lot of media, academic and police attention over the past decade. The Centre For Civil Society (CCS) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal organised the Social Movements Conference to bring together a range of academics, activists and representatives of the COSATU, SANCO and the South African Communist Party (SACP) to debate five broad themes that cut across 17 different movements. Two main points of debate emerged.

PRO-GOVERNMENTAL vs. ANTI-GOVERNMENTAL FORCES: IS THERE A POSSIBLE COMMON "LEFT PLATFORM"?

Project co-director Adam Habib (Human Sciences Research Council, HSRC) in his introductory remarks stated that: "The social movements occupy a continuum from the counter-hegemonic to the rights-based," from those which advocated "the overthrow of the state and the establishment of socialism" to those that worked within the system. Patric Bond (Centre for Civil Society, University of KwaZulu-Natal, CCS) said he saw this as "a temporary problem" that would be resolved either by a combined state strategy of concessions and repression, with the resulting demobilisation of the new social movements, or by a split in the ANC Alliance itself.

Such a split has been long anticipated by opponents of the Alliance or of some of its constituent organisations, but the Alliance has shown itself to be resilient against such a challenge. Certainly, it appears that a dramatic vertical split, separating the Alliance into its components, is highly unlikely while a less obvious, slower horizontal split, with all Alliance partners bleeding membership at the grassroots level, is a process that is already underway.

It is interesting that the state-entities in its own right (as distinct from the government) has become a point of debate once again, especially in the light of how it either accelerates or impedes social progress. Activists' ideological attitude towards the failed state-capitalist command economies of the former Soviet Bloc tend to colour their views of the state.

In the red corner, the most outspoken critics of the "democratic" and "developmental" nature of the state and current government policies were Anti-Eviction Campaign (AEC) militant Ashraf Cassiem, independent researcher Ashwin Desai, Peter Dwyer of the Alternative Information & Development Centre (AIDC), Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF) spokesperson Dale McKinley, and Landless People's Movement (LPM) national organiser Mangaliso Kubheka. Their basic position was that massive job-losses, water & elec-

tricity cut-offs, all under the ANC's Growth, Employment And Redistribution (GEAR) economic austerity programme were hurting the poor, and that the government had unreasonably turned its guns and dogs against those protesting this situation.

In the yellow corner, the most outspoken critics of the supposed "imposition" of foreign socialist ideology onto the social movements were Michael Sachs, of the office of the ANC secretary-general, SACP spokesperson Mazibuko Jara, Young Communists League (YCL) executive Buti Manamela, Donovan Williams of the SA National Civics Organisation (SANCO), and Neil Coleman of COSATU. Their basic position was that the ANC government had

criminalize the social movements, 99% of all criminal charges brought against activists over the past 10 years, some for offences as serious as arson and attempted murder, had resulted in acquittals.

The ARN noted that while the social movements of the apartheid era had been established as a deliberate anti-state counter-power (popular civics, street committees, militia etc), the new social movements were often springing up in massive squatter camps where the state simply did not exist, bar perhaps the odd police raid for illegal immigrants. People with no experience of the state other than a policeman's boot once in a while had either no, or at the very least, an estranged, relationship with the state, but it was really the vacuum of any state structure in these areas that generated the development of mutual aid movements to address social concerns where the state had no capacity.

Thus many social movements were extra-state rather than anti-state, a product of vacuum rather than of adversarial relations, as they have often been seen by the ruling party. In other words, they have adopted a "counter-hegemonic" position out of necessity, not ideology. The formation, development, structure, aims and alliances of such movements were markedly different from those in more formal serviced areas: the difference being between people fighting for access to water and those fighting against cut-offs. Firoz Khan (University of Stellenbosch) made a similar point,

noting that the new social movements sprang up as a result of the "deficiencies of developmental planning practice", of the disjuncture in democratisation of the apartheid state that saw "citizens still suffer routine violation of their rights" despite their "formal status".

Trevor Ngwane (Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee, SECC) said that the ANC had been attempting to disrupt the realignment of the working class - as a class in its own right with its own identity, separate from the interests of the expanded bourgeoisie - by diversions such as sport and patriotism, but that "the unions, COSATU and the social movements must oppose this."



Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee march against electricity cut-offs, 2000

made massive strides over the past decade in securing labour, gender and basic amenities rights despite the crippling legacy of apartheid, and that the social movements' anger at government was misdirected, becoming, by opposing the ANC's new democratic order, de facto anti-democratic, so they should rather join forces.

Sihle Mkhize, of the Association for Rural Advancement (AFRA) and a board member of the National Land Committee (NLC), noted that the new social movements "were described as ultra-Leftist, but their activities were largely within the ambit of the [South African] Constitution." Mkhize recalled a point made earlier by McKinley (APF) that despite the ANC's attempts to

He earlier said that: "The ANC leads the attack on the working class. That is notwithstanding the good that it has done. This does not preclude alliances with COSATU and SANCO rank-and-file. The ANC has found itself having to rely on heavy-handed policies instead of hegemony. In South Africa, there is race identity, nationalism, gender, class, youth, etc. What we need is a 'new person' to overthrow capitalism - and this will only happen through struggle."

Ngwane's point was taken up by Sachs (ANC), who suggested that alliances could be struck between the social movements and progressive members of the administration, saying: "Surely, the Jo'burg City Council is not a monolithic bloc of neo-liberal guys waging a war on the poor? The political elite is not the same as the economic elite." He noted that the recent Diepsloot "rebellion", as he termed it, over rumours of the forced removal of a shack settlement north of Johannesburg, had been waged in part between local ANC and SANCO factions.

But he warned against the "European proposition" that what mattered today was no longer the contest between Right and Left, but between "centres of power and the periphery". He claimed that the ANC government had a higher expenditure on social services than European governments at the height of their welfare states, so the government could not be regarded as a "mechanism for neo-liberalism".

The theme of some form of engagement between social movements and the Alliance was probably best expressed by Coleman (COSATU) who noted: "One shouldn't gloss over serious differences [but] we need to distinguish between strategic and tactical alliances. We need to engage. There is no monolithic state, no monolithic government or monolithic Alliance... We need to build a Left platform within the ANC and the Alliance and without it. In 2002, relatively progressive decisions were made at the ANC Congress."

Coleman earlier provided the delegates with a brief historical sketch, from COSATU's perspective, of recent ideological shifts in the Alliance, saying: "The period from 1996 [the year of the ANC's shift from the social-democratic Redistribution and Development Programme to the neoliberal GEAR] until 2001, COSATU was hammered by Right-wing forces in the ANC [some of whom even wanted to] cause a split in the Alliance, but in 2001 and 2002, those forces were defeated. Then from 2002 until now, we've focussed on issues of economic policy. And we made a breakthrough yesterday on the anti-terror legislation. The possibility of a new developmental path is being explored."

Coleman claimed that "COSATU has relied on the power of its constituency,

rather than on its historical relationship with [the ANC] government." His overarching message to social movements was that with "a refusal to engage, the danger is that you cede the ground to other forces. Without a national platform between Left forces and a Left-of-centre government, all your gains are under threat." Bond suggested that a new common Left platform could be "de-commodification", based on a combined struggle for free basic services, and against cost-recovery, privatisation and their offspring.

The point was made earlier by Sakhela Buhlungu (Sociology of Work Programme, SWOP, at Wits University, who produced the study on the APF) that COSATU largely addressed the concerns of the fully-employed, while the social movements focussed largely on the unemployed, leaving casualised labour unrepresented. Coleman responded that "within our affiliates, there is an increasing engagement with casuals." This suggested to some del-



1999: Protesting the Johannesburg Council's neoliberal igoli 2002 plan

egates that flexibilised labour was a possible field of convergence between the organised labour and social movements. Peter Alexander (Centre for Sociological Research, Rand Afrikaanse Universiteit, RAU) said that the self-defined working class was expanding to include beggars, sex-workers and home-keepers, but warned that the broader the concept of the class became, the further one moved from the Marxist labour theory of value.

Alexander emphasised the fact that COSATU had recently been able to mobilise marches of some 100,000 workers around the public sector wage negotiations, so the social movements could ill afford to divide the working class by ignoring them. Dinga Sikwebu (organiser, National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa, NUMSA, at Iskor) said: "My interest is in the unity of the working class... it's easy to say 'NUMSA is a sweetheart union', but why are our members in Soweto not finding themselves in the APF?"

Buhlungu (SWOP) noted that organised labour and the social movements could at least co-exist peacefully in parallel, "instead of shouting at each other as if they are con-

testing the same things." But Cassiem (AEC) pointed out that a conceptual gap existed between the way social movements and organised labour approached alliances, saying that the AEC had made approaches to COSATU, but COSATU had "wanted leadership-to-leadership contacts, while we want to access the floor." He warned that while the Alliance partners wanted to disregard the social movements, their own memberships would decline if they ignored the issues being raised by the poor.

Pieterse recalled a quote that "the ballot-box is the enemy of revolutionaries", but the debate is far from resolved. The most recent and controversial example of co-operation between social movement and Alliance forces is the decision by the LPM to join the SACP's "Red October" land reform campaign. This came in for some withering criticism, and was staunchly defended in turn. This could be viewed as the first of Pieterse's forms of engagement:

pressing for a national land summit in partnership with an Alliance member, while mobilising the peasantry autonomously at the base.

Desai (independent) said: "This LPM thing confuses me... is it entryism into the SACP to turn it into a communist organisation?" This raised a lot of laughs. Someone else (my handwriting failed me here) asked whether the LPM saw it as likely that the SACP would go as far as land invasions if necessary, stressing that they would eventually become necessary. Kubheka (LPM) said the LPM's "No Land, No Vote" campaign earlier this year had seen President Thabo Mbeki "coming down from the skies begging for votes. The LPM is not going to be aligned with any political party... If the SACP is genuine, we're with them, but if not, even if the train is going 200km/h, we'll jump off."

Kubheka said: "Only if the SACP is with us are they a true communist party. They mustn't wear the T-shirt of Ché Guevara if they are playing, because that man wasn't playing!" Manamela (YCL) appealed for a common front, saying that the "unity of the UDF [United Democratic Front] led to the defeat of racial oppression. If we fight, we'll never get anywhere." McKinley responded that the basis of unity had to be a class position, one that the Alliance had "buried" since democracy.

So if I could suggest a possible resolution to this debate (though none was drawn collectively by the conference), it is that both "sides" recognise that their opposites are not monolithic and that a common Left programme is certainly possible - at least at rank-and-file level, and especially desirable between the Social Movements Indaba (SMI) umbrella formation and other social movements on the one hand and COSATU and other organised labour on the other.

Clearly, the SMI sees COSATU's membership of the Alliance as bedevilling the possibility of this realignment taking place, while COSATU sees itself as sufficiently autonomous of the ANC and powerful enough in its own right for this not to be a problem. In terms of terrain, there appears to be definite reasons for the two forces to converge expand to deal with the concerns of casualised and self-employed labour, and with the common theme of decommo-dification. This convergence, it must be pointed out, aspires to be horizontal (within the working class) and not vertical (a cross-class pact). Now that I have dealt with the main point of convergence, let us examine the main point of divergence, as phrased by Bond:

INSURGENT AUTONOMISM OF THE MULTITUDE vs. PROGRAMMATIC SOCIALISM

Bond did not explain his terms, but an elastic definition of programmatic socialism could embrace the social democrats of the Alliance (if one accepts Sachs's assertion that "all of us here belong to a common progressive movement"). Moving leftwards across the spectrum one would find a range of Trotskyist formations, while the autonomists (much as they dislike being pigeon-holed) and the anarchists represent the insurgent multitude line. But in practice, all South African Left revolutionaries would employ a shifting combination of both programme and insurgency, recognising the constantly changing tensions between the masses and a revolutionary minority with a set programme.

The insurgent multitude position was perhaps best expressed by Dwyer (AIDC), who said the Alliance "needed to put to bed the fear that they [the social movements] are a mob lead like sheep by charismatic leaders. The people are not against leaders, but against leaders who are not under their control... Take care not to reduce these organisations to their leaders, because they are much more complex." Cassiem (AEC) described AEC meetings as "organised chaos" which operated according to democratic rules that were not immediately apparent to outsiders. "We are not social movements, we are not NGOs; our members are our communities." Bobby Peek (environmental group Groundwork) maintained the legitimacy of direct action, saying that "engagement can happen in a variety of ways, militant as well as [formal]."

The programmatic socialism position was expressed by Jackie Cock (Department of Sociology, Wits, who compiled the report on environmental movements), echoing Coleman (COSATU) in favour of cross-class collaboration: "To renounce formal politics is to leave formal bourgeois state power uncontested." Sachs (ANC) said: "The problem in South Africa with academics associated with the social movements is that they are close to Northern [hemi-

sphere] analyses, but not to local analyses," adding that a definition of the social movements seemed to require the participation of "middle-class intellectuals and NGOs."

Jara (SACP) said: "Historically, there is a tendency in the country on the Left and outside the ANC: to what extent has that tendency driven the social movements?" Sachs had earlier said "the discourse that says the central divide is institutions versus the masses is not able to survive," criticising the "new Left that is outside of and in opposition to institutional power", saying this position put them in opposition to the liberation movements.

Desai (researcher on PAGAD), hit back at Sachs' theory of the Northern origins of the theories being applied by SA intellectuals to the domestic social movements: "Sachs says our ideas come from Europe. Where does GEAR come from?... Is Washington closer to us because it's full of African-Americans?... Social movements are challenging the trajectory, nature and form [of GEAR]. A living politics is what is outside the Alliance." McKinley (APF) responded to Sachs, saying the transition to democracy had failed to deal with "the fundamental question of private property. Privatisation is not an issue; it's fundamental to life."

McKinley went on to say: "We have a loyalty to the content of the liberation struggle, while the Alliance has a loyalty to the form. These grandmothers didn't come out of some small Trotskyist sect that wants to smash the state. It's not an anti-ANC or anti-Alliance thing, its anti-capitalist; there's a difference between those." He said the state had "institutionally marginalised" the social movements. "The amazing thing is the social movements are reclaiming those [socialist] traditions while the traditional Left is disavowing them."

"The big question," said Habib (HSRC), "is who makes the choices?", claiming that "the role of leadership, of an advanced cadre and of resources is crucial" to the emergence, development and sustainability of social movements. Dwyer later put it differently, saying: "Leadership is also about the auntie in Chatsworth who says 'No!'" He did warn, however, that "people who were against structure, were often in leadership" - a problem that we anarchists call "the tyranny of structurelessness", the avoidance of responsibility and the pretence not to be in command thanks to amorphous, mandateless organisation. Dwyer said it should be acknowledged that "these organisations are ideological terrains and politics with a small 'p' can't be pushed out because it'll come back in the side door."

Sophie Oldfield (Environmental and Geographical Sciences, University of Cape Town, who did the study on the AEC) also said that the different traditions that activists came from coloured their relations with the state and its "new mechanisms of accumu-

lation by dispossession [privatisation]." But under these conditions, social movement engagements with the state had often tended to be entanglements with the police, plus defensive court actions, Desai (independent) noted: "The state responded to the social movements with mass arrests, criminalisation..."

Independent researcher Stephen Greenberg (who compiled the report on the LPM) said that the "social movements emerge out of direct grassroots action" rather than some imposed socialist ideology. Cock (Wits) asked whether the demand for decommo-dification could unite a "new socialist movement". Lesbian activist Donna Smith (Forum for the Empowerment of Women, FEW) recalled that at a life-skills-training workshop on Constitution Hill in Johannesburg, "one young girl said 'the Constitution means nothing to us because we are fighting for survival.'" The black lesbian community had no social spaces of its own in the townships, yet regularly suffered from extreme violence, rape, victimisation, unemployment and psycho-emotional health issues, as well as HIV/AIDS.

These conditions, rather than formal politics or ideology, forged their identity and their activism. As Alexander (RAU) said, the movements were "not just conjured up by Ashwin and Dale." It was noted by other activists, that the social movements had been absent from recent social upheavals such as Harrismith and Diepsloot, indications that the grassroots are under extreme pressure of pauperisation that is not linked to any ideology, but that also such insurgent sparks, lacking ideology and an overarching project, died out swiftly in the night. They were united merely by what Cock (Wits) - who had examined a failed social movement, the Steel Valley Crisis Committee - called "carnival bonds", lacking any long-term commitments, research skills at community level (relying too heavily on outsiders), and international links.

Buhlungu (SWOP) noted that organisations like the APF were not undifferentiated, with strong debates already experienced around possible participation in the local government elections, with more looming ahead of the next local elections (the SECC having already decided, he said, to participate). This debate has proved particularly fiery, with a range of different opinions emerging, roughly divided between: a dual strategy of building an electoral front in council, to give profile to the grassroots struggle; or an exclusive concentration on grassroots struggle, either because electoralism is seen as premature or as a corrupting diversion.

Khan (Stellenbosch) said the new movements also arose because of "a contestation between technocratic knowledge and grassroots knowledge" and that if one protested outside the formal, legal channels, "you're busted, arrested." This amounted to "representative rather than

substantive justice and the marginalisation of the poor." If the state wanted to call itself developmental, Khan said, the challenge was to "tilt the institutional resource base in favour of the poor." Engagement existed in three forms, he said: actively bargaining at the top and applying pressure from below; a passive "politics of patience" that allowed matters to develop both within the state and outside it; and an adversarial "break with corporatist negotiations" by an emergent radicalism.

It seems clear that the social movements engage in all these three forms, shifting according to circumstance, but that a very real divide, based on a complex interplay of class, identity and struggle tradition, exists between the programmatists (especially of the government) and the insurgents. I would suggest that though this divide can be crossed, and capital has shown itself very adept at compromising the militant working class, it is a divide that history has shown should never be crossed.

LESSONS FOR THE LEFT

In the view of the ARN, the lessons of the conference were threefold: a) a recognition that vast common ground exists between the social movements and organised labour in which they should collaborate, autonomously and horizontally between grassroots affiliates and rank-and-file members, to build working class unity and autonomy, outside of the capitalist bourgeoisie, and against it whenever necessary. We cannot prescribe to the movements whether this collaboration can be extended to allegedly progressive individuals within the administration: that decision needs to be taken by the constituents themselves, though we would warn against collaboration with bourgeois forces, noting that it is irrational to expect a rape victim to find common cause with their rapist; b) a recognition of the importance of dealing with the problems some of our constituencies have with poor internal democracy, organic leadership and access to adequate resources, in ways that give greater voice to our poor and marginalised; c) a recognition that the social movements, however uneven, are an organic part of the proud, pluralistic traditions of a century of anti-capitalist anti-racist working class struggle that has constantly renewed the true, egalitarian southern African liberatory project and will continue to do so as long as class rule remains the order of the day. We are not anti-democrats, but ultra-democrats.

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The class agenda has been stressed by Mbeki, whose famous speech to the Black business body, NAFCOC, called on Black capitalists to enrich themselves while "empowering" local communities. Peter Mokaba, then head of the ANC Youth League, was equally clear in an internal ANC paper in 1998 that the ANC is a "national liberation movement and not a socialist organisation," and its goal was never to "destroy the capitalist class and establish socialism". Rather it is to create a "vibrant and democratic, prosperous and non-racial capitalism."

Mokaba, like all other senior ANC leaders, is now a prominent "national" businessman. The most prominent example is, of course, Cyril Ramaphosa, with a market influence of R137 billion, but he is hardly alone. As Smuts Nkonyama - spokesperson for Mbeki - said recently of his role in Genesis Telecom, "I did not struggle to be poor."

AT THE PARTY

The Communist Party, and most COSATU leaders, have remained blind to what this says about the class agenda of the ANC. BEE commentary from these quarters remains constrained by lifelong support for the ANC and the two-stage perspective. This translates into an attempt to maintain the Alliance with the ANC while giving BEE a more "left" spin.

In the *Financial Mail*, Zwelinzima Vavi of COSATU made the illogical claim that labour must contest the "middle class" to ensure "black entrepreneurs" do not align with the "capitalist class" - which boils down to the moralistic belief that Black capitalists can be nicer than White capitalists if workers appeal to their consciences.

In a stinging reply to such views, Saki Macazoma of the ANC NEC - who got his start in the state-owned Transnet, where he fired 15,000, and Wits University, where he fired another 615 - argued it makes no sense to expect "socialist outcomes" from "capitalist methods." In *Umsebenzi*, the SACP's Jeremy Cronin admitted that changes in "the superficialities of pigmentation boardrooms" did not stop capitalist actions being shaped by the market, nor morality. But Cronin failed to define what "transformation" actually meant, or explain how it was linked to the SACP's supposedly socialist programme. In effect, he said nothing at all.

More recently, Archbishop Desmond Tutu's Nelson Mandela Lecture described BEE as elitist, attracting a vicious reply from Mbeki. Mbeki could not deny the point, and so his focus was on Tutu's personal credentials.

Predictably, Blade Nzimande, the centrist SACP boss, has tried to smooth over

the cracks raised by such exchanges, speaking of a "BEE debate convergence" but carefully defined the enemy as the "white capitalist class," neatly sidestepping how the SACP's struggle against "the capitalist system itself" would impact on Black, ANC, capitalists.

AGAINST CAPITALISM

There has been a profound transformation of the SA economy. By 1999, the financial sector had grown to roughly 20% of the economy, but only employed 210,881 people - about 1% of the labour force. This has underpinned a rapid increase in non-productive economic activities - share trading, currency speculation, and financial services. At the same time, the *Sunday Times* reports that the number of families with more than \$30 million each, had increased four times from 150 in 1994 to 690 in 2003 - while 22 million live in poverty, with 6 million workers unemployed.

Both outcomes are a direct result of the neo-liberal and BEE policies of the ANC.

However, the major working class structures - the SACP, COSATU - remain wedded to the ANC; the poverty of their response to BEE shows the terrible limitations of a strategy of relying on the capitalist ANC for socialist results.

Fundamentally, the problem facing the working class movement in SA is a POLITICAL problem - a problem of weak perspectives and confused thinking. This blind loyalty to the ANC generates a politics of worshipping every utterance of Mbeki while trying to "contest" the ANC from within - a futile task.

Until this is resolved, the working class will remain crippled in the face of the neo-liberal capitalist onslaught. At the end of the day, workers get the leaders they deserve - until ordinary workers reject this nonsense, they will remain voting fodder for the ANC capitalists and their BEE strategy.



Extracts from an Anti-Repression Network (ARN) report on the Social Movements Conference, Johannesburg, October 28 & 29, 2004. Full report online at: www.nu.ac.za/ccs/default.asp?3,28,10,1472

DOING THE LIBERATION LANG-ARM: AFRICA & SOUTH AFRICA AFTER “AFRICAN SOCIALISM”

Ten years into our new bourgeois democracy and the ANC released a triumphalist analysis of its achievements entitled “Towards a 10-year Review”. But one has to go further back and look at the continental soil within which the roots of the “miracle” transition from racial class rule to deracialised class rule grew. Our analysis here is mainly extracted from an interview with the ZACF published by the 36-year-old British anarchist journal Black Flag.

AFRICA’S ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT

Long under the whip of hyper-extractive colonial regimes, the development of the entire spectrum of left-wing revolutionism in Africa has been slaved firstly to the late or very narrow development of an industrial working class in a handful of countries - and secondly to the development of bourgeois national liberation struggles. In the first case, it was only countries such as South Africa, Algeria and Egypt where colonialism established significant settler populations (many of them labourers from Europe, or indentured labourers from India and Asia) to run sophisticated economies based on mining, commercial agriculture and their associated infrastructure. It is no accident that it is in these countries that anarchism first gained a foothold more than a century ago, finding its highest expression in the IWW-influenced revolutionary syndicalism of the Industrial Workers of Africa (IWA, founded 1917) and of the Indian Workers Industrial Union (IWIU, founded 1919) in South Africa. A notable exception to the trend is in the then-Portuguese colony of Mozambique, where it appears that an anarcho-syndicalist trade union tendency allied to the powerful Portuguese General Confederation of Labour (CGT) flourished into the late 1920s in the complete absence of a domestic communist party.

Two factors contributed to the decay of the “first wave” of revolutionary syndicalism & anarcho-syndicalism in Africa. Firstly, as with other Anglophone countries (former British colonies), the lack of specific anarchist organisations crippled revolutionary syndicalist organisations in meeting the challenges of Bolshevism and of emergent petit-bourgeois black nationalism (the ANC for instance), so the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU, founded 1918) that the IWA and IWIU gave birth to, spread as far afield as Zambia and peaked in 1927, but collapsed in ideological confusion thereafter. Secondly, from the early 1930s, much of Africa started to fall under fascism: Mozambique, Angola and other Portuguese territories under Salazar’s regime after 1927; Libya, Ethiopia and Eritrea under Mussolini’s Italy in the late 1930s; Morocco and Spanish Sahara under Franco’s Spain from 1936; Algeria, French West Africa (and Madagascar?) under Vichy France during the war; and Belgian Central Africa under the Rexist regime during the war. The post-war acceleration of national liberation struggles thus took place in a vacuum - but also

in a condition of largely Soviet or Maoist seduction and patronage, while parts of Africa remained under fascist control into the mid-1970s (Angola and Mozambique).

The concept of “African socialism” as defined by continental so-called liberation leaders like Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere, Amílcar Cabral, Agostinho Neto, Eduardo Mondlane, Ahmed Ben Bella and others has been hugely influential in the mal-development of the continent, both ideologically and economically. Some post-liberation countries experimented initially with a form of statist decentralisation, notably Libya under Muammar Gaddafi and Tanzania under Nkrumah while on the opposite side of the spectrum were the hyper-authoritarian Marxist regimes of the likes of Mengistu Haile Mariam’s Ethiopia or the outright neofascism of Gamal Abdel Nasser’s Egypt. The primary external “socialist” influences (based on direct military/political/economic investment) were the old USSR and to a lesser extent Cuba, China, North Korea and East Germany. The collapse of the Soviet Bloc had a big impact on the sustainability of the façade of “socialism” across much of the continent. Some regimes, like that of Mengistu, have collapsed. Others like Frelimo in Mozambique, have transformed themselves into bourgeois-democratic regimes. Still others like Zambia under Chiluba have capitulated wholesale to neo-liberalism. The evaporation of funding from foreign “communist” states was instrumental in provoking the collapse of unsustainable African “socialism”.

COLD WAR’S END USHERS IN TURBO-CAPITALIST “LIBERATION”

The collapse of apartheid and the end that brought to cross-border conflicts in Namibia, Angola and Mozambique in particular, the defeat of the old US client regimes like the former Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo) and proxy forces (like UNITA in Angola), and the exit of dictators like Daniel Arap Moi of Kenya and Hastings Banda of Malawi has brought the Cold War in Africa to an end. But the raping of the DRC by trans-national corporations, under the cover of military conflict between nine countries, the exposure of the fraud of electoral politics through the corruption of new “democratic” regimes like that of Frederic Chiluba of Zambia, and the last-ditch scorched-earth stance of “socialist” dinosaurs like Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe

have kept tensions high. Adding to this is the smooth sub-imperialism of South Africa’s Thabo Mbeki and his neo-liberal “New Partnership for Africa’s Development” (NEPAD) that has ushered in a whole new era of struggle on the continent.

Lacking sustained anarchist/libertarian/syndicalist mass organised traditions, the continent has not proven a rich environment for the revival of anti-authoritarian organisations. Where they have arisen, it has perhaps been only in part because of the ideological vacuum created by the collapse of the validity of “socialism”, and perhaps more because of specific local conditions: in Sierra Leone, it was the pitiful working conditions in the diamond mines that gave rise to the IWW section there; while in Nigeria, leftist opposition to military rule helped forge the Awareness League. In South Africa, the legitimacy crisis of the reformist SACP and the erosion of worker gains by neo-liberalism have helped spur some interest in anarchism. But levels of interest and involvement in anarchist organisations on the continent are extremely low (by comparison to Latin America or Eastern Europe, for example) and should not be overemphasised.

Today, there are significant structural, legal, economic, political and social changes in the “free” South Africa - but also a widening wealth gap that for many black inhabitants means very little has changed in real terms. The scattered black homelands and their duplicate bureaucracies (including their armed forces) have been consolidated into a unitary state. A new human-rights-based constitution and the scrapping of all overt racially discriminatory laws has established a bourgeois parliamentary democracy in which the ANC is by far the dominant party with a 2/3 majority that they hope to consolidate in this year’s general election. Less overt racial laws, those that are class-based and biased in favour of big business have, however, ensured that the black majority remains landless, impoverished tenants in their own country. The country’s protectionist economics - reinforced by sanctions isolation - has been replaced by an open-door policy that has allowed cheap imports to flood the country, leading to the loss of some 1-million jobs since 1994. Probably the hardest-hit is the clothing-manufacturing sector that has long been a stronghold of workerist organising, as well as organised agriculture. Wildcat strikes have been most marked in the motor manufacturing sector, and in the late 1990s there were a spate of

blockades of arterial roads by radicals in the transport sector. Labour battles between progressive and reactionary unions lead to a few murders in the ports and mining sectors. Unemployment stands at perhaps 40%, but we will discuss labour in more detail later.

THE REAL MEANING OF THE END OF WHITE SUPREMACY

The fault-line of racism (closely duplicated by class) is the fundamental reality of South African life after three centuries of white supremacist rule and deliberate underdevelopment of the ruled, whether indigenous, Asian, brown or black. This is an inescapable fact and one that has troubled, challenged and enlightened our movement right from the start when we were essentially two underground organisations in the dying days of apartheid. While the laws dividing people along colour lines have changed, inequality and the wealth gap are increasing. Some 75% of all SA homes lack food security and one can find children suffering from malnutrition-related diseases like marasmus and kwashiorkor on the doorsteps of our cities. HIV/AIDS has taken a huge toll and thousands of child orphans now find themselves the heads of their households, caring for their infant siblings as best they can. Some 62% of all blacks, 29% of all coloureds, 11% of all Asians and 4% of all whites currently live below the poverty line, a dramatic increase during the "decade of democracy". Some 3.5-million have been evicted from their homes since 1994, often at gunpoint, while millions more have had their water and electricity cut off by municipalities who are far more interested in cost-recovery than the health of their residents. Many black people have commented on how life under the old apartheid regime was in some ways better in that there was more job security and there were state subsidies in services, which have been eroded by the neo-liberal GEAR (Growth Employment And Redistribution) economic policy of the ANC, which is a home-grown structural adjustment programme that even surprised the IMF and World Bank with its austerity.

As the ZACF, our overarching approach as revolutionaries is class struggle - but that in the SA context this so closely replicates a struggle against white supremacism that the two have to work in tandem, without the class issue absorbing or downplaying the importance of race. As a "multi-racial" organisation that has deliberately united activists from divided backgrounds, our main difference with the Western anarchist movement is that we do not feel the need for separate organisations for people of colour. We must say that we welcome the founding of ethnic organisations such as the Anarchist People of Color (APOC) network in the US, or the Popular Indigenous Council of Oaxaca - Ricardo Flores Magon (CIPORFM) in Mexico - where such organising

appears to be crucial to establishing the validity of anarchism in marginalized communities. But in a majority black region where we have for too long been separated, racially-specific organisations would send out totally the wrong signals to the oppressed classes.

The racist white ultra-right has gone into a significant decline following the failed pre-1994 election Afrikaner Resistance Movement (AWB) invasion of the Bophuthatswana bantustan and the last-gasp election bombing campaign. The current treason trial against the Farmer Force (Boeremag) is demonstrating how weak and pathetic the white right is, despite grandiose plans of blowing up dams and seizing control of the armed forces - all of which came to naught. Still, racism is a deeply entrenched reality in many farming areas where black labourers have been murdered, tortured or shot at, often for the mildest of supposed infractions. On the other hand, studies have shown that most murders of

ANC still talks at its public rallies of its "national democratic revolution" - and in the boardrooms about market fundamentalism. It has fired on peaceful demonstrations at home - and cosied up to noxious dictators like Gadaffi, Suharto, Mugabe, Musharraf, Kabila and Castro abroad. These contradictions are supposedly resolved by what the ANC claims is a "developmental state" theory. Now clearly, the party has to deal with the basic provision of infrastructural services in order to do three things: encourage foreign direct investment; secure their voter base; and improve the overall skills levels of the black working class so as to ensure a significantly large domestic market and a skills base to enable manufacturing to take the economic lead from primary industries like mining, agriculture and fishing. The ANC leadership has embraced the neo-liberalism that has meant stupendous wealth for some 300 black dynasties-in-the-making, the 5% of the Johannesburg Stock Exchange that represents "black empowerment". It was mid-way through former President Nelson Mandela's term that the ANC shut down its quasi-socialist pretensions (the Redistribution and Development Programme, RDP) and instead wholeheartedly embraced GEAR. In essence, the ANC is leading its working-class voters on a merry dance, a sort of "liberation lang-arm", headed for the poorhouse.

It is important to recognise that the ANC does not rule alone (a common misconception abroad, we find), but previously in cahoots with the Zulu chauvinist Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), and also the anti-communist Pan Africanist Congress (PAC). In the Western Cape at provincial level, it has even been in bed with the retreat New National Party (the old apartheid government). These alliances of convenience have tilted the overall political balance of the ruling clique in the direction of centre-right, which is despicable, given the decades of socialist rhetoric that motivated millions of South Africans (and their foreign allies) to back the "liberation" movements against apartheid. Today, Mbeki's ANC is a blatantly capitalist party (although like Lula in Brazil and Chavez in Venezuela, it talks left while acting right). It introduced GEAR, which calls for cuts in social spending, privatisation, the casualisation of labour etc. With the socialist rhetoric of the past discarded, the ANC is revealed to be true to its original class interest: it is the party of an emerging bourgeoisie, of chieftains and technocrats from the black middle class who wanted to have a bigger slice of the capitalist pie.

The Communist Party alongside COSATU - which at some 1.8-million members is the biggest trade union organisation in South Africa - is in an alliance with the ruling ANC, the Tripartite Alliance. The SACP basically toes the ANC party line and uses their influence to gain votes for the ruling



white farmers are criminally and not politically motivated. Right-wing vigilantism and murder has become a problem, both with the black/white Mapogo a Matamaga organisation in the northern provinces and the PAGAD Muslim/criminal organisation in the Western Cape, but both seem to be pretty quiet now. The main thing to recognise is that the mainstream right-wingers, both white and black, are now all in parliament. And not a single parliamentary party is opposed to neo-liberalism. So for many black, coloured, Asian and indigenous South Africans, their historical experience of marginalisation, joblessness, poverty, malnutrition and racism is unchanged, perhaps even deepened.

THE PSEUDO-SOCIALIST REVOLUTIONISM OF THE ANC & SACP

The ANC remains a member of the Socialist International - yet President Thabo Mbeki is a self-described Thatcherite. The

party, and in return high-ranking SACP party officials have seats in government. The rank and file of the SACP is pretty inactive with many members abandoning the party to join the social movements and other members who don't like the direction the party is taking being expelled. The role of SACP in its own view is to provide a "critical socialist engagement" with the ANC regime, but its critics say its real role is to provide "red cover" for the ANC's anti-working class policies. On the other hand, despite the fact that key ministers are communists - police (which glories under the name Safety & Security, SS), public works, public enterprises, the office of the presidency, water affairs & forestry - the SACP clearly is a subservient organisation. This was shown by the ANC forcing SACP deputy general secretary Jeremy Cronin to apologise for warning about the possible "Zanufication" of the ruling congress, meaning it was starting to take on the dictatorial attitudes of Mugabe's ZANU-PF party. We characterised the spat as one between "Cronin capitalism and crony capitalism"! Cronin himself, a loyal Stalinist (and don't Stalinism and Thatcherism go well together?) booted a real Bolshevik, Dale McKinley, out of the SACP for, essentially being too communist. McKinley is today spokesman for the Social Movements Indaba, the umbrella of the social movements within which the ZACF works.

Although COSATU is the most progressive of the four big labour federations, it has been compromised in its struggles for the interests of the rank-and-file; instead of organising workers for struggle the congress has preferred to negotiate with bosses behind closed doors. Like the SACP, the high-ranking COSATU officials are also using their positions to get comfortable seats in government and to canvas for the ANC. With the fall of apartheid, workers on the shop floor have been dissuaded from taking militant action, and a once strong fighting union has become a lapdog for the ruling elite. One of the main compromises made by COSATU is its endorsement of a Labour Relations Act that, while supposedly guaranteeing more labour rights, in fact places so many mediation obligations before aggrieved workers that it is extremely difficult to embark on a legal strike. Also, COSATU is party to NEDLAC, a cross-class labour/government/business policy forum that tends to lock it into agreements with the ruling class.

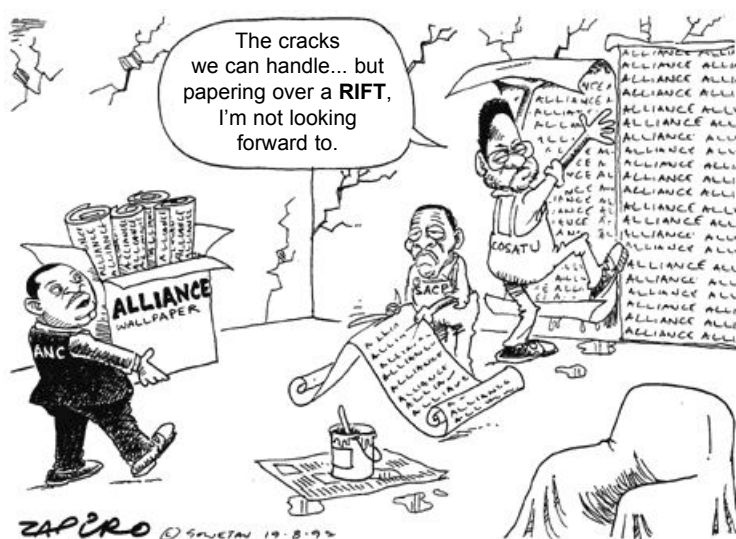
Then there is the growing practice of organised labour investing in capitalist companies or investment schemes, leading to possible conflict of interest problems if labour disputes arise at the companies invested in. In addition to this, the forced amalgamation of COSATU's more radical and powerful unions (chemical, and transport in particular) with defunct and backward ones (paper & pulp, and another transport outfit, respectively) created mega-unions on paper, but diluted the radicalism and effec-

tiveness of these progressive redoubts of organised labour. This, combined with the erosion of internal democracy by the imposition of "democratic centralism" to silence comment from the floor, the expulsion of revolutionary leaders and shop-stewards and the bugging of union offices by suspected ANC internal intelligence agents have neutered the power of COSATU.

This also lead to an anarchist change of tactics away from the anarcho-syndicalism represented by the Workers' Solidarity Federation (WSF), shut down in 1999 in order to reorient ourselves more towards building serious militants outside the compromised unions, but inside poor communities of the unemployed and underemployed. But times are changing: COSATU has, on its own version, aided in the defeat of the right-wing within the ANC that wanted to marginalize worker interests; has taken a stridently independent line at loggerheads with the ANC on the Zimbabwean question; has extended an olive branch to the once-spurned radical social movements (see our report in this journal on the Social Movements Conference); and continues to mobilise hundreds of thousands of workers in strike actions, the latest being the 50,000-strong National Union of Mineworkers strike in March 2005 as we write this.

NEPAD & SOUTH AFRICA'S SUB-IMPERIALIST ROLE

South Africa has a very specific condition that makes it distinct from the rest of Africa. As the continent's most powerful economy, it is also its most important sub-imperialist power, acting as a sort of regional policeman and continental viceroyalty on behalf of British imperialism. The distinction of the UK as our imperial power is as important - and neglected - as the recognition that Brazil is the sub-imperialist power in Latin America, operating on behalf of US interests. Remember, even if the UK is junior to the US, post-colonial Britain continues to dominate relations in Anglophone Africa, which include four key regional economies: Egypt in the north, Nigeria in the west, Kenya in the east and South Africa in the south. The only other imperialist power that wields quite as much influence in Africa is France, but France had only one key regional economy, Algeria, and lost much control there after "liberation", leaving it with the purely extractive raw material / cheap labour pools of the Francophone west. As the main continental sub-imperialist power, post-



apartheid SA has: pushed the neo-liberal New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD); restructured the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) as the neo-liberal African Union (AU); invaded its neighbour Lesotho in 1998 to falsely "restore democracy" (i.e.: crush a pro-democratic mutiny and claim it was a coup attempt); hugely expanded its own multinationals like Anglo American into the interior, often as buy-ins to privatisation; and advanced exploitation by, for instance, enclosing huge areas of northern Mozambique by pushing peasants off the land and settling white racist commercial farmers there.

SA's infrastructure, economy - and armed forces - make it a formidable capitalist adversary to the working classes of our neighbours north of the Limpopo River. So the SA situation is intimately tied to being in the sub-imperialist centre on the one hand - and on the other to having a large industrialised working class with a very recent insurrectionary history. The class in SA also has an appreciation of the promises of communist liberation fresh in its memory - while it stares down the barrel of ANC-driven neo-liberalism. Otherwise, the wars in central Africa (DRC and southern Sudan in particular) are winding down, while West African regions like Sierra Leone (where until destroyed by the civil war, there was a 3,000-strong IWW section) and Liberia continue to bleed. Still, the DRC "peace" deal has foolishly endorsed rule-by-the-gun by simply recognising all combatants as legitimate claimants to a slice of the pie. This, the continuing attracting of plundering countries like Angola and the DRC of diamond and oil wealth by foreign (and African) multinationals, and the continued presence of interahamwe Hutu militia in the Great Lakes region make it appear that central instability is likely to continue for some time. And when the guns fall silent, there is still class rule, so no true peace. There is only one remaining colony - Western Sahara, which remains under Moroccan occupation - so the dynamics of national liberation are long faded. Essentially, we all face the same neo-liberal enemy today, but many of our neighbours do it without basic human rights,

infrastructure, the means of living beyond a medieval average age of 40 - and without any libertarian revolutionary tradition within living memory.

AN INSURRECTIONARY PHOENIX: THE "GUERRILLAS" OF THE NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

It was the opposition to privatisation by the SA Municipal Workers Union (a COSATU affiliate) that helped spark the new wave of resistance to capitalism. The unions may be hamstrung at the moment, but the bite of neo-liberalism is taking its toll on the shop floor just as much as in the township streets, so we believe it is only a matter of time before they experience a resurgence of rank-and-file militancy. In about 2000, several new anti-neo-liberal resistance strands (those opposing the payment of apartheid foreign debt, or the privatisation of municipal water, for example) united to form a constellation of new radical and progressive social movements. After holding the fort for several years in a political wilderness where criticism of the ANC/SACP was virtually unheard of (maintaining a propaganda initiative and running the Workers Library & Museum in Johannesburg as an independent working class space), the anarchist movement got directly involved in the new social movements, helping found, alongside comrades of various revolutionary persuasions, the Anti-Privatisation Forum in Johannesburg. Today the movements embrace an estimated 200,000 supporters across SA - as compared to the SA Communist Party's largely inactive 16,000-paper membership.

It must also be pointed out that it was comrade B and the late comrade Mandla of the ZACF collective, the Shesha Action Group (SAG) in Soweto who started Operation Khanyisa, meaning "light", the operation that illegally re-connected some 25,000 homes in Soweto. These "guerrilla electricians" are literally heroes to the millions of poor people who have had their lights cut off by state power supplier Eskom since 1994. We as the ZACF do not adopt a rose-tinted view of these social movements, for they are very uneven in theory and practice, are currently in a period of disorientation and retreat, and embrace reactionary as well as progressive and revolutionary elements. But they, hopefully in alliance with resurgent militants within COSATU's rank-and-file, have enormous potential to form the core of an emergent working class power that will be able to challenge the barons of neo-liberalism with the aim of putting large swathes of the economy in the hands of the producers.



SWAZILAND: A BITTER TASTE TO THE SUGARCANE

INTRODUCTION

On January 25 and 26 this year, the Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions (SFTU) held a national strike to try to force Africa's last absolute monarchy to transform itself into a multi-party bourgeois democracy. But it was a poor showing, with a demonstration of only 500 in Mbabane. Leaders from the SFTU, the Swaziland Federation of Labour (SFL), the People's United Democratic Movement (PUDEMO), the Swaziland Youth Congress (SWAYOCO) and the Ngwane National Liberation Congress (the last unpopular among the youth for "scratching the belly of the beast") lead the Mbabane march. SFTU general secretary Jan Sithole said the regime's Imbokodvo party rode to power on the back of popular struggle: "The people of Swaziland liberated themselves from the British rule."

But the lesson of popular power that he hinted at appears to have been lost. The strike was a far cry from the power of that demonstrated by the general strike of 1997 in which tens of thousands of workers including many from the state sector downed tools in response to the state's detention of four pro-democracy leaders including Sithole. In 1997, the general strike shut down the economy for almost two weeks and suggested an insurrectionary, social solution. But it was not to be: as the following report from our members in Swaziland will show, the pro-democracy movement there is still heavily compromised by bourgeois nationalist influences - notably the duplicitous ANC and SACP.

PRAYERS OF DESPERATION

You are in Manzini! The taxi with a South African registration is blasting toyi-toyi struggle songs, reminding you of the days when people's fear was replaced by the spirit of resistance during the fight against the apartheid regime, coupled with its demise towards the 1994 elections. Amongst the folks, individuals are wearing bright yellow ANC T-shirts with Mbeki's head on them, as if they are appealing to the king: "Please learn from the South African government. If you don't listen the same thing that happened to the former South African regime is going to happen to yours."

Many people are attracted to immigrate in South Africa for jobs. When they visit back home they introduce the life of the big city. And they've tasted a disparate life to their fellow-country people, which gives them guts to challenge royal power.

There are quite a considerable number of hawkers and street vendors from Mozambique who also have T-shirts of the main political parties in Mozambique with the head of that political party's candidate. Those in Swaziland have few ideas on how to achieve their freedom except praying, because wearing the T-shirt of the local movement can be leading to misery. Inside the fleet of buses, which is the major transportation of people, only gospel music is played and screened. The mainstream media is state-controlled and manipulated by the royal family and its friends. Many people in the very remote, primitive and forgotten villages have no access at all to any source of media.

The unemployed, peasants and workers are mostly dependent on subsistence farming for survival. As for the workers, their wages are paltry. Doubled with miserable working conditions, workers are continuously trampled. For more than 10 years the entire work force at the royal hotels were only casuals. The bosses are issuing retrenchment notices unilaterally. State workers are not allowed to join unions or strikes. For months nurses did not receive their wages. The trade union bureaucracy whines occasionally, but only to justify the king at the end of the day. Unanimous with the need to have the king, they say: "The king is innocent but only his advisers are to blame.", which helps keep the king interesting and civilised to his counterparts on the continent who are implementing neo-liberalism.

LAND-BARONS ON THE WARPAT

The king is on a land-privatising spree. There's an influx of land prospectors, resulting in white strangers falling on the land, staying and introducing their western and European designed houses and their 4x4s. The next thing people hear are that dams, sugar cane fields and game reserves will be built on the same land where they are staying. Sugar is one of Swaziland's big exports. Already there are peasants who got lured into the snare by the hope that their lives will improve when they were told they'd automatically have ownership in the sugarcane fields. Later when the time to benefit comes, after they've worked so hard turning their land to sugarcane fields, they are told they owe the bank and the price of the sugar has gone down. Which means their land is now owned by the bank and they are advised to sign retrenchment documents.

In other incidents, the peasants are being told they may not have more than

ten cows. A commotion erupted between the inhabitants of the land and the government authority over evictions from the land without remuneration: sheriffs instructing bulldozers, with police to arrest anyone resisting. If the attacked communities show any solidarity in resisting the evictions, the army is immediately sent to set up a checkpoint in the vicinity, and the entire community is evicted. This madness of harassment is also advancing the plan by the state to group the people together (the state says it is planning on installing water, electricity, roads, shops and that there will be jobs for people, but this is all being done at the state's convenience, not the people's).

BOURGEOIS NATIONALIST POLITICIANS TREAD WATER

There are three political parties, of which one is the People's Democratic Movement (PUDEMO). The other two have nothing much to do with the masses; mostly they represent the interests of the local businesses and they are infested by the administrators of the same regime. But PUDEMO is sub-ANC and it remains convinced the ANC will bring change in Swaziland. They believe in the ANC, not the masses of South Africa, because they only know the ANC "liberated" South Africa without understanding exactly who marched, demonstrated, boycotted and died for a complete change, not the neo-liberal war on the poor under the ANC of today. When the current king, Mswati III, came to power, PUDEMO urged the people to give him a chance. Within couple of years PUDEMO started barking as the king became more repressive than his father, King Sobhuza II.

Because of the decree declared in 1973 by Sobhuza, which gives the king absolute powers in decision-making, political parties and similar bodies can be dissolved and prohibited if they pose questions about royal power. There has been an attempt to amend this decree, by leaders of political parties and heads of state. Initially they took a diplomatic approach to build the bridge, but the Swaziland National Council (SNC), which is the main shareholder in the negotiations, is just an appendix of the state, which in turn is subject to the king. The negotiations have been going for more than a decade. But the people on the ground have no idea whether the amendment will feed the entire Swaziland or just the very few. They've been waiting patiently. And every time their leaders are coming out of the talks empty-handed.

Whenever there's a public outcry, leaders from different sectors are summoned by the king to have an amending ceremony with him (he's always doing cultural rituals to remind everyone not to forget him).

Clearly the heads of state are procrastinating on negotiations, but the pressure is amounting on the movement because their promise to have a multi-party government by 2008 is being shattered. This has caused impatience and exhausted the slightest lawful means and it is driving mostly the youth in the direction of armed struggle because the youth blames their leaders for wasting time. During these unnecessary delays the state is brutally storming activists with beatings, torture, arrests, interrogations, raiding and confiscations of office equipment. Some have been killed or paralysed.

PARALYSIS ON THE LABOUR FRONT, TOO

The two federations are Swaziland Federation of Trade Union (SFTU) and Swaziland Federation of Labour (SFL). The SFTU's two biggest affiliates are the Swaziland National Association of Civil Servants (SNACS) and Swaziland National Association of Teachers (SNAT), both of which are currently suspended from the federation after they expressed dissatisfaction about lack of transparency and democracy in the SFTU federation's bureaucracy. Although SNAT only mentioned late balloting of its members, as the cause of its failure to participate in the strike, both affiliates shunned this year's strike at the last minute, because of their suspensions. The affiliates of the union federations are run like spaza shops. There's no solidarity: affiliation is only for recognition. Most leaders of the affiliates are civil servants in the highest posts, where they have to dance the tune of the king. And they are involved within certain sub-structures which keep the communities submissive to the king's orders.

It is the same with the union federations. There's a fight amongst its national executive committees, mostly because of their relationships with certain political parties: everyone needs to have their political party's agenda recognised. Currently four affiliates are suspended. PUDEMO's relationship with the federation is bitter and most of the suspended affiliates are close to PUDEMO. But the relationship between the trade unions and the political movement is vague and unpredictable. The movement gets its funding and guidance from the ANC government and the tripartite alliance. Obviously the sole interest of the South African government has nothing to do with liberating the oppressed, suppressed and repressed destitute indigenous masses of Swaziland, but rather to protect and advance business co-operation with South Africa and abroad so the mega-rich and up-coming black capitalists can collaborate with the king in expropriating the land belonging to the people. Also to get cheap

labour and expand their market claws. So the political movement is expected only to democratise the kingdom - not to get rid of the entire royal power.

REVOLUTIONARY YOUTH ENTER THE FRAY

But outspoken members of student organisations have also expressed their disapproval of the SFTU's leadership. The Swaziland Youth Congress (SWAYOCO) is the sub-division of PUDEMO. The youth on the ground have been autonomously influential in grassroots political activities, which keeps the movement in step with the oppressed men and women in the street of Manzini and Mbabane. These are mostly the youth in the high-school level, who are frustrated at the extreme poverty and disease in their communities and at the lack of job prospects, limited mainly among male students to possible careers in the state security apparatus (the regime is the largest employer and the entire work force is only 96,000). They are mainly inspired by the youth in South Africa during the 1976 uprising and are demanding free and quality education with their student representatives taking part in decision-making.

Active in an environment where HIV/AIDS, hunger and curable disease decimate their communities, these energetic young up-coming revolutionaries are prepared to go beyond PUDEMO's reformist agenda. After explaining to them what is happening today in South Africa under the ANC government, they immediately realised that the ANC is playing a dirty game in Swaziland. Clearly, the ANC betrayed masses around the world. In Swaziland the masses were promised that immediately after South Africa was freed, Swaziland would be liberated, but until this day, the masses are still waiting. The 1996/7 uprising in Swaziland came from the Swazi people on the street, hoping the ANC would give them support. But instead, leaders from various pro-democracy groups ended up in the government and became obstacles to the possible fall of the king. These political activities were always there, although 1996/7 is most remembered because of the influence of the South African masses.

BUILDING REVOLUTIONARY COUNTER-POWER

Today the people of Swaziland are so completely downtrodden that the youth are starting to speak of going for guerrilla training and taking up the armed struggle, in emulation of MK in South Africa. But that path is the road to disaster, as clearly shown by the ANC-lead state's military invasion of the constitutional monarchy of Lesotho in 1998 in order to crush a pro-democratic mutiny. Swaziland, a land-

locked country similar in many ways to Lesotho, can only expect a similar bloody military intervention if its people resort to arms too early. The only real option for the people of Swaziland now is for them to forever sever their dreams of liberation from trickster politicians and opportunistic labour leaders.

Swaziland is not undergoing a national liberation struggle in the conventional sense. But its popular classes are still having to fight against the neo-colonialism of South African and British capitalists allied with local chiefs. Against this background, the opportunities for a real pre-revolutionary dual-power situation to be developed by committed rank-and-file revolutionaries in Swaziland are great. This is because a) it is geographically and culturally very close to the grassroots revolutionary traditions of South Africa, b) there is no communist party or any other substantial left-wing presence able to sidetrack the struggle, c) the entire civil society, trade union and political movement is excluded from power - but corrupted by bourgeois aspirations, and d) people are angry at poor working conditions and at blatant land-grabs by capitalist agribusiness and brutal evictions by the state.

The revolutionaries among SWAYOCO's youth must start building counter-power in Swaziland by forming horizontal links with like-minded groupings in the region, especially in South Africa, who have more members and resources

to assist them. They must start building secret rank-and-file members' networks within SWAYOCO, PUDEMO, SFTU, SFL and the suspended unions, and within social groupings of the working class, peasantry and poor, whether of women, or high-school children. So long as they remain directly democratic, allowing their policy decisions to be taken by those most immediately affected, these local and regional networks will be able to form the foundation of a social force strong enough to undermine the capitalist monarchic state by seizing power - and putting it in the hands of their communities and so build a libertarian socialist system.

These new networks must shatter the chains that bind them to bourgeois nationalist politics. Their united voices should cry out - not for patriotic chauvinism - but for A SOCIAL REVOLUTION OF THE OPPRESSED CLASSES! They must realise that tens of thousands of Swazis live beyond Swaziland's borders, thus the liberation of the Swazis recognises no such artificial boundaries: the movement must be INTERNATIONALIST and ANTI-IMPERIALIST. They must also recognise the liberation of the Swazis requires the liberation of all other ethnic groups, black, white, brown or yellow, united against all centres of exploitation: the movement must be ANTI-RACIST and ANTI-CAPITALIST. They must recognise that to deny the king and his Tinkundla system its

authoritarian rule is not to deny their "culture," but to deny the ruling class its extraction of profit from their sweat in the name of culture. Anarchists only support what is progressive and democratic in each culture. We are against the chieftaincy, the monarchy, and traditional laws that oppress women. We want grassroots democracy, not authority, traditional or otherwise.

The power of the people is not to be found in the boardrooms of the parasite class that feeds off the people: the movement must be ANTI-BOURGEOIS, but militate for WORKING CLASS SOLIDARITY. Recognising that our enemies are anti-democratic, the movement must practice DIRECT ACTION IN THE FIELD and DIRECT DEMOCRACY IN DECISION-MAKING. Recognising that our enemies sow only distrust, disease, death and dismay, the movement must practice MUTUAL AID, and fight its resistance struggle in ways that LIBERATE, not enslave, those they seek to free. These new networks must champion the autonomy of grassroots organisations, for WORKER CONTROL OF THE MEANS OF PRODUCTION and COMMUNITY CONTROL OF MUNICIPALITIES. That path is the road to a true social revolution that the 1997 general strike only hinted at.

ZACF International Secretaries



ABC-SA PROTESTS THE MURDER OF CIPO-RFM ACTIVISTS

The Anarchist Black Cross (southern Africa), a member collective of the Zabalaza Anarchist Communist Federation (ZACF), held a protest against the Mexican government on Saturday March 19 as part of the Anti-War Coalition's contribution to the international anti-imperialist day of action marking the 2nd anniversary of the mass-murder by Coalition forces of Iraqi draftees.

The ABC (SA)'s Anti-Repression Network, the Anti-War Coalition and the Freedom of Expression Institute were among more than 100 signatories of a protest petition that was sent to Mexico's ambassador to South Africa, M de Maria y Campos, protesting the murders by death-squads of 27 members of the Indigenous Popular Council of Oaxaca - Ricardo Flores Magon (CIPO-RFM), numerous attacks on CIPO-RFM autonomous municipalities and the shutting down of their community radio station.

The CIPO-RF embraces well over 1,000 members in 24 autonomous villages in Oaxaca state, southern Mexico. It is named after Oaxacan anarchist revolutionary Ricardo Flores Magon who was murdered in the American prison of Fort Leavenworth in 1922, a martyr to anti-imperialism if ever there was one. CIPO-RFM has close fraternal ties with the Zapatistas' indigenous councils and autonomous municipalities in neighbouring Chiapas state.

Although it is an unarmed formation that uses passive resistance tactics, CIPO-RFM has come under severe repression from death-squads, apparently backed by the neo-liberal Mexican state under President Vicente Fox. This state is acting as the instrument of destructive US imperialist policy in Central America and has filled its jails with almost 400 political prisoners, many jailed for life for "crimes" of resistance to Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA-ALCA).

March 21 was called by the CIPO-RFM as an international day of protest against the killings by the death-squads that serve US-Mexican elite interests against the peasantry, working class and the poor. Given the prior plans for the anti-war march on March 19 and given the common American imperialist source of both the Mexican and Iraqi people's pain, we combined our protest with those of our comrades in the social movements.

The ABC (SA)'s action also recalled the centenary of the ABC, founded in Tsarist-occupied Poland in 1905 during the uprising of that year, and now with an operational presence in some 64 countries across the globe. The ABC and its fellow centenarian organisation, the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), have demonstrated a militant libertarian longevity that has far outlasted any of the facile "communist" internationals that were mere fronts for nationalist foreign policies.

As an African anarchist delegate to Zapatista-held Chiapas in 1996 and a personal acquaintance of CIPO-RFM delegate Raul Gatica, who is in hiding in fear of his life, I appeal to the international anarchist community to shame the Mexican government into calling the dogs off our vulnerable comrades in Oaxaca.

- Michael Schmidt, ABC (SA)
www.zabalaza.net/abc

ZIMBABWE: TIME FOR AN END TO THE ELECTORAL ROAD

The April 2004 elections pose tough questions for the MDC, ZCTU. The choices made now will have massive consequences. We suggest a way forward.

UP FROM UNDER

In 1999, the class struggle in Zimbabwe was at an all-time high. An ongoing series of general strikes in the private and State sectors had shaken the State apparatus headed by Robert Mugabe and the ZANU-PF machine. The union movement, centred on the ZCTU, was numbered among the ten fastest growing worldwide. Riots in urban townships, a farm workers strike of unprecedented scale and success, a militant student union, ZINASU, and protests by war veterans crippled the neo-liberal Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) that had been in place since 1991. The SAP - championed by a ZANU-PF in office since 1980 - was quietly abandoned by the end of 1997.

These events, reported in Zabalaza, and its predecessor, Workers Solidarity, were immensely inspiring, and were part of a broader upsurge of class struggle in South Africa, Swaziland, and Zambia. The possibility of a post-neo-liberal and post-nationalist Zimbabwe seemed very real. ZANU-PF was widely reviled, corruption scandals well known. The party's hold on power seemed shaky. What was, in practice, a one-party State, seemed doomed: throughout southern Africa, popular movements were toppling postcolonial rulers, and Zimbabwe seemed next in line. In 1999, the ZCTU, ZINASU, the National Constitutional Assembly, NGO, and others, began a process that led to the formation of a very popular "Movement for Democratic Change" (MDC). Then, in early 2000, ZANU-PF lost a popular referendum on changing the constitution.

HOW THE REST WAS LOST

The game seemed up, yet over the next five years, ZANU-PF has made itself more unassailable than ever. Several factors have led to this outcome, but foremost must be counted the ruthlessness and cynicism of the regime, coupled with the hopeless politics of Zimbabwe opposition. In 1997, the regime co-opted the war veterans' groups with a massive "pensions" pay-off totalling US\$350 million. In 2000, after the referendum and just before the mid-year elections in which the MDC made its first appearance, the regime launched its invasion of 1,600 White-owned commercial farms. Orchestrated through the police, army, and Central Intelligence Organization (CIO), the actual seizures

were led by a motley coalition of self-described "war veterans," ZANU-PF officials, and CIO men. The operations were simple: a group of unemployed people would be bussed onto a farm; farm workers and landowners were driven off; actual ownership of the land passed to the leaders; and small plots and some food were given to the loyal elements of the "resetled" unemployed.

This brilliant gamble achieved many things. It broke the back of the farm workers union, the largest ZCTU affiliate and the MDC's main rural outpost. It transferred vast resources to the bankrupt State, which could be used to discipline and reward followers: in a very real sense, quasi-feudal chieftaincies of the "communal" lands were replicated throughout what was once the heart of the capitalist economy. By attacking an unpopular and prominent minority, Zimbabwe's whites - many of whom were sympathetic to the MDC - the regime was able to appeal to popular racism, while making sure its land reform left the African bourgeoisie of ZANU-PF larger and wealthier. Many on the left have consistently ignored the overtly racist elements of the land invasions, yet these proved its strongest appeal.

Despite the myth - current amongst South African activists - that peasant productivity is higher than that of capitalist farmers, Zimbabwe's new rural relations were quite unable to replicate the performance of the high productivity, capital-intensive, commercial farms. This led to massive shortfalls in food output and exports, destroying a sector previously responsible for one quarter of all jobs and 35 percent of exports. The spectre of starvation led innumerable international charities to send in food aid, but this was captured by ZANU-PF (independent distribution was not permitted), and became one more tool of power: food was exchanged for ZANU-PF loyalty.

SELECTIONS AT ELECTIONS

The rural counter-revolution was coupled to a massive crack-

down on the MDC and its affiliates. Morgan Tsvangirai, former ZCTU head, and now MDC leader, was subject to two treason trials, ZINASU's Tinashwe Chimedza was beaten unconscious, media was suppressed, and ZCTU and MDC meetings attacked - either by the police and army, or by "war veterans," - by now a quasi-official militia, the "green bombers." For those who have illusions in ZANU-PF's professed radicalism, the continuity with the 1980s must be noted: the Matabeleland Massacre left between 5,000 and 15,000 dead, and resulted in the dissolution of the rival ZAPU party.

Even so, the MDC won 57 about of the 120 elected seats in the 2000 general elections - a further 30 seats are appointed by the president - and performed well in the 2002 presidential elections. It captured the main urban working-class constituencies, but was unable to break into the rural areas, where the bulk of the population lives. The traditional chiefs, and the "new chiefs" on the seized farms, used every means necessary to ensure ZANU-PF carried the day.

By 2005, however, the long-term effects of repression, hunger, patronage politics, vote-rigging and unremitting tyranny had helped break the MDC. ZANU-PF ended up with 78 seats, the MDC only 41, with voter turnout it's lowest in years. Huddled urban crowds greeted the results in silence and resignation. While the South African government, and its regional allies in SADC continued to make fools of themselves, proclaiming the elections "free and fair," social movements in South Africa, and COSATU and the SA Communist Party, agree with Tsvangirai: the results reflect "disgusting, massive fraud."

WHERE TO NEXT?

How far Zimbabwe has come from the glory days of 1999! Repression played its role in the change, but other movements, in far more desperate circumstances, have achieved far more in far less time than the



Found at GPSA-GO.ZA

MDC and the ZCTU. Furthermore, the 2005 elections have been characterized by substantially less repression than the previous elections, yet the MDC has done even worse.

At the heart of the problem is the absolutely pitiful politics of the MDC. While it grew from the hard-fought struggles of the popular classes, the new party never offered much. Built by unions and students and township fighters, the MDC soon became a moderate party. Direct action, which had turned the tide against Mugabe, was now on the backburner: all efforts were to be concentrated on elections. Despite the obvious fact that ZANU-PF has manipulated the electoral process since first coming into office, elections are the be-all and end-all of the MDC leaders. Strikes and demonstrations in Zimbabwe have been replaced by international fund-raising, providing obvious ammunition for ZANU-PF's "big lie" that the MDC is the tool of Tony Blair.

The struggle against neo-liberalism, which had driven the popular movements, was replaced by an MDC commitment to privatisation and cost recovery policies: in power, the MDC-led Bulawayo town council soon began to implement hated cut-offs of basic services. The shift to neo-liberalism reflected the most basic structural problem of the MDC: it was not under the control of the popular movements, and was soon hijacked by moderates who hated criticism and tried to purge the small Trotskyist ISOZ group. As a party that called itself a "united front of Zimbabweans," the MDC was unable to develop a resolutely working class and peasant programme that went beyond simply criticizing repression to champion collectivisation of resources, self-management, equality and internationalism.

The confused leaders of the MDC are quite unable to tackle the hard-nosed Mugabe and ZANU-PF. They dealt with electoral abuses in 2000 and 2002 by appealing to the courts: even though the judiciary is routinely manipulated by ZANU-PF.

They backed off from an earlier decision to boycott the 2005 elections, allowing another Mugabe gamble: a temporary

decrease in repression to win international legitimacy and, more importantly, renewed foreign aid. After the elections, Tsvangirai - obviously scared of another treason trial - made vague comments about renewed popular protest, but the tradition of ongoing protest has lain dormant for years, and the MDC has no real plans to re-awaken it. This political posing is simply irresponsible: it was followed by a military occupation of the Bulawayo townships.

WAY FORWARD

As anarchists, we have, of course, no faith in elections. While we consistently supported free elections in Zimbabwe as a step forward, we stressed that only ongoing protest could achieve such a goal, and strongly opposed any participation of the popular movements in such elections. An open parliamentary system is preferable to a tyranny, but only because it is associated with an extension of rights that facilitates further struggles - not because the parliament itself is a road to revolution.

We have always taken a flexible position on the forms of struggle in Zimbabwe. In 1999, we supported the need to unite the popular movements, and also the formation of a political organisation in Zimbabwe. However, we advocated a revolutionary and anti-parliamentary body, rejecting the emerging MDC policies. In 2001, we argued that the potential for the MDC to become a "radical grassroots organisation to shake the foundations of the Zimbabwean capitalist state" had been lost. Even so, we argued the MDC must be defended against repression. In 2003, our view was that the focus had shifted to elections, and we therefore stressed the need to focus on overthrowing Mugabe. This implied that an MDC government would be better, but actually left the question of the future quite vague.

It is now clear, however, that the MDC's electoral road is at a dead-end. What future struggles take place, must take a new path if they are to achieve anything. The wave of struggle built up in the 1990s is almost exhausted, with a tangible mood of despondency has set in the popular classes. Everything points to another turning point, like that of 1999. At present, the MDC is on the eve of accepting Cabinet posts, which would be an absolute disaster. Either the MDC is reinvented, or it must be abandoned. There are signs of dissent in the ranks - ZINASU is opposed to electoral participation, the moderate Women of Zimbabwe Arise expressed its unhappiness with Tsvangirai's fumbling, and the underground Zvakwana group seems keen on protests - but these must



Zimbabwe 1997 - cops clash with workers

come to something.

BUILDING TOMORROW

It is time for reflection and reassessment, a period that must give rise to a new direction, or accept another 20 years of misery. Our opinion is that elections must be abandoned. It is necessary to go back to the streets in protest, both against repression and against poverty. The precise form of protests cannot be decided in advance, but the use of the general strike must be seriously considered. The protest movement must reject the political party model of organising, and centre, instead, on self-organisation, mandates and delegates, and self-activity and self-education. Only such a movement will have the resilience to tackle ZANU-PF, survive its inevitable retaliation, and create new and better relations between the people.

It is necessary, also, to have a programme that can inspire the masses. It must offer something more than an exchange of Mugabe's iron fist for Tsvangirai's bumbling hands. It must champion important demands - abolition of the chieftaincy, job security, social welfare, political freedoms, reindustrialisation - and foster a project of creating a post-capitalist, self-managed society, based on horizontal control of the communities and workplaces by those who live and work in them in place of just changing the faces at the top. It must link the fight against neo-liberalism and tyranny in Zimbabwe to similar fights in neighbouring countries. That is the basis for a united front of the oppressed classes, the water of struggle that will nourish the tree of freedom.

Note: We are looking for Zimbabwe correspondents - please contact us through the addresses at the back of this magazine.



The SACP's youth wing, the Young Communist League (YCL), backed by a groundswell of support from what SACP secretary-general Blade Nzimande admitted was a "significant minority" in at least six of the nine provincial branches of the party, is arguing that the SACP should stand on its own right in the local government elections scheduled for March 2006 at the latest. The SACP leadership has come out against this rank-and-file proposal, worried that if it is accepted at the party's special congress this May (2005), it may pit the party against the ANC and drive the government rightwards. The go-it-alone tendency has arisen because of frustration at the SACP's declining influence within the Alliance and also with the sell-out actions of much of its leadership. But standing as a "workers' party" for elections to bourgeois state-capitalist forums is a deeply compromising strategy which has seen revolutionary Marxism decay into reformist social democracy across the world. All of which raises questions of what role self-described communist organisations including our own, the ZACF, should play and on what field: among the working class, or among the bourgeoisie? So here is an excellent article by our comrades in the ACL of Mexico, which gives their answer to that question. We encourage the rank-and-file of the SACP and the YCL to honestly examine this alternative method of grassroots communist organising and ask of themselves: "Does this not ring true to us?"

REVOLUTIONARY ANARCHISM &

POLITICAL PARTIES



For a long time there has been an erroneous conception regarding anarchists' views on parties. In this document, we, as revolutionary anarchists, wish to clarify the matter a little. We will begin by saying that our ideology is rooted in the philosophical and political ideas of the Russian revolutionary Mikhail Bakunin. With that said, we believe that, as a self-sacrificing fighter for the cause of the workers and therefore an enemy of bourgeois capitalist exploitation and State repression, Bakunin understood perfectly the historical need for a revolutionary party, consisting only of the most dedicated elements who sacrificed themselves to the revolutionary cause and were an integral part of it.

Not only did Bakunin understand the need for an Organisation with these characteristics, but actually formed one in the year 1868 called the "Alliance of Socialist Democracy". The Alliance was founded in the same period as the "International Working Men's Association" (the 1st International) and the members of the Alliance were unjustly and mistakenly accused by the Marxists of "wanting to weaken the International by forming a new one from within". The reality, however, was totally different, as far from wanting to weaken it, Bakunin had realized quite rightly that the best complement to the Workers' International would be an Organisation of the best elements with a high level of revolutionary consciousness which could lead to a large number of workers Organised in the International, in an authentically socialist and revolutionary direction. This is how Mikhail Bakunin explained the relationship between the Revolutionary Organisation of the vanguard (the Alliance) and that immense, formidable mass Proletarian Front, the International Working Men's Association:

"The Alliance is the necessary complement

to the International. But the International and the Alliance, while having the same ultimate aims, perform different functions. The International endeavours to unify the working masses, the millions of workers, regardless of nationality and national boundaries or religious and political beliefs, into one compact body; the Alliance, on the other hand, tries to give these masses a really revolutionary direction. The programmes of one and the other, without being in any way opposed, differ only in the degree of their revolutionary development. The International contains in germ, but only in germ, the whole programme of the Alliance. The programme of the Alliance represents the fullest unfolding of the International."

- Mikhail Bakunin

Although we anarchists recognize the need to build a revolutionary Organisation with tactical and ideological unity, whose task is to encourage the development of the workers' consciousness of their revolutionary historic role of getting rid of capitalism and the institutions of inequality, we reject the use of the term "party" to refer to such an Organisation. We reject the use of this term for two reasons which derive from the word in question. The first is confusion with the bourgeois political parties; the second is the Marxist-Leninist concept of the party. It is these two ideas that we will be examining below.

THE CONCEPT OF "PARTY"

As a Revolutionary Organisation, our aim is to make the proletariat aware of its social strength and of the fact that this very strength can bring down capitalist society. Our work, therefore, involves the Organisation of popular forces from below, in other words independently of the ruling class. We believe that it is inappropriate to

present ourselves to the workers as a "workers' party", given that nowadays party is understood in its bourgeois sense associated with elections, parliament, political power and a whole series of concepts which go against the idea of popular emancipation. We are convinced that those parties and individuals who describe themselves as representing the exploited classes and the oppressed, and who create hopes of emancipation in them through elections and parliaments, are instead only reinforcing the bourgeois political institutions and thereby (logically and effectively) also despotism, exploitation and tyranny...

THE LENINIST PARTY AND THE ANARCHIST POLITICAL ORGANISATION

We run the risk not only of being confused with the bourgeois parties, but also with the Leninist ones. And something interesting emerges here: Leninism promotes the creation of a party that represents the interests of the working class. Some might draw the conclusion that anarchist ideas and the Leninist model have much in common, but that is something that we flatly reject, for two reasons. To begin with, as can be seen from the earlier part of this document, the concept of an Organisation of the most advanced elements ("vanguard") was not something that was first expressed by Lenin. Decades before, Bakunin had understood that mass defence and resistance fronts alone (such as trade unions and international workers' associations) were not sufficient to undertake a revolutionary struggle as they were lacking, amongst other things, that nucleus of the most conscious revolutionaries who could fight to ensure that the popular movements did not fall victim to reformist or openly bourgeois tendencies.

Continued on Page 19

ANARCHISM, ALTERNATIVE UNIONISM & WORKERS' STRUGGLES IN IRAQ

ANARCHISM AND THE IRAQ ELECTIONS

This Sunday Iraq goes to the polls and gets to choose its own government. Or so we are told. Probably no one who was opposed to the war actually believes this but its useful to look at the flaws in the election process and then to ask what hope is there for the Iraqi people. The first obvious flaw is that the election is taking place while Iraq is occupied by a foreign army. Add to this that the current regime was more or less appointed by that army. And that the process is set up to return a national assembly which will have very little power to do anything itself except draft a new constitution. International election observers will not actually be in Iraq but in neighbouring Jordan - presumably peering over the border with very powerful binoculars.

Who is standing is actually a secret as is the location of polling stations. It gets even more bizarre; US soldiers have been passing out candy and election material while on patrol! Presumably this is the sort of thing that UN electoral division chief Carina Perelli meant when she said that "the US military has been I would say overenthusiastic in trying to help with this election". Earlier this month a scandal quietly erupted when the (US government appointed) Prime Minister Iyad Allawi was revealed to have handed out \$100 bills to journalists at a campaign meeting.² Some of the opposition parties have been complaining of the lack of media coverage they have received, this might be one explanation.

Even the method of voting is pretty odd. Basically the list of candidates is being kept secret so you vote only for a party/list. There are no constituencies, each party gets a number of candidates elected in proportion to what its (supposed) national vote was. There is a choice of over 90 of these lists and as many are themselves coalitions it's not at all clear what, if anything, most stand for. The lack of constituencies is relevant when you consider that most if not all Sunni Arab votes are liable to boycott the election. If Iraq had been divided up into constituencies this wouldn't matter so much as even a tiny turnout in areas that are predominantly Sunni Arab (i.e. the 'Sunni triangle') would ensure a somewhat proportional number of Sunnis were elected. But without any such constituencies the end result will be an Iraqi national

assembly comprised entirely of Shia and (Sunni) Kurds. If what you were aiming for was civil war leading to partition there is an absurd logic to this. But maybe this is too cynical?

THE DEBATE IN THE ANTI-WAR MOVEMENT

Of course the joy of being an anarchist is that even if these elections were to be conducted perfectly we'd still recognize that all they would do is bring to power a gang of politicians who the people would have no power over. So to a certain extent we can stand above the squabbling that is taking place in the anti-war movement in relation to the elections. But the squabble is interesting. Basically some anti-war commentators, most notably Gilbert Achcar have pointed out that if the elections are conducted fairly the results may be very uncomfortable for the US occupiers. In fact it would be likely to "give way to a Parliament and a government in which Shia Fundamentalist forces, more or less friendly with Iran, are hegemonic".³ Given all the noise that the US government has been making in recent days about war with Iran this could be a little awkward for them. But in fact the powers of the national assembly are limited, in particular unless it can get a 2/3 majority, so the US designers of the election have probably already covered themselves against this outcome.

Achcar's suggestion that it might be a mistake to write off the elections in advance greatly annoyed some of the Trots involved in the anti-war movement. They tend to quietly have the view that 'my enemy's enemy is my friend' and thus try and silence any criticism of the resistance in the anti-war movement. This rather self-indulgent line is based on hoping that Iraqi workers will defeat imperialism for them and never mind if the process of doing so throws them into the hands of Islamists. After the mass executions of the left that followed the Islamist takeover of the Iranian revolution * this sort of self serving 'logic' from the professors of the western left seems and indeed is a little unpleasant and I don't intend to discuss it further. Both positions do seem to flow from a requirement of 'what would

be best for us in the western left'. They ask 'Would it be better if Iraqis militarily defeat US imperialism for us or would it be better if they defeat it through the ballot box'. Given the suffering our governments have already imposed on the people of Iraq this seems like a very odd way of approaching the question of the Iraqi elections.

Another approach - an internationalist approach - would be to ask what is in the interest of the ordinary Iraqi people and what can we do to show solidarity with them. When you ask that question the choice offered above between a Shia dominated Islamist regime or a Sunni dominated Islamist regime doesn't seem to have so much to offer. Already huge numbers of women are now forced to wear the veil in Iraq. Over 1,000 Iraqi women have abandoned their university studies. Hinadi, the star dancer of the group 'el-Portoqala' was killed by Islamists while visiting her family. Apparently "el-Portoqala sings modern songs, which outraged some Islamists who said the songs were pornographic, liberal and 'alien to conservative Iraqi society'. In reality the songs merely showed women dancing and posing as lovers".⁴

WHAT HOPE FOR THE PEOPLE?

If you rely on the mainstream media and the left then Iraq seems to be without hope. The choice it appears is only between US imperialism and Islamist reaction. In fact Iraqi workers have not been sitting by since the occupation - there have been many militant workers struggles in Iraq, it is just nobody bothers to report on them because they don't fit into the predefined conceptions of the struggle. There have been rumours and some reports of anarchists active in Iraq



US soldiers hand out sweets before Iraq elections



Power workers demonstration in Baghdad against terrorist attacks on electricity and oil workers - 24 March 2005

but it seems that such forces are not yet significant.**

However there are other progressive forces who have managed to get news of their activities onto the web.*** They are also calling for a boycott. In particular the Worker-Communist Party of Iraq declares that "The Election is a Puppet Show to Legitimise the U.S Policy in Iraq."⁵ They see the intention of the US in this election to be "to impose a reactionary Islamic and ethnocentric puppet government."⁶ The WCPI are an interesting neo-Leninist group which broke with orthodox communism out of their experiences in the workers councils thrown up in the Iranian revolution of 1979 and the uprisings that followed the 1991 Iraq war. The conclusions they came to are in some ways similar to that of the Dutch and German Council Communists of the 1920's. Naturally enough this experience also left them with a healthy hostility towards the Islamist program. They warn that "Iraq has become a battlefield for a war between American and Islamic terrorism and the Iraqi masses are constant victims caught amid the fire between both these terrorist forces". They have a fairly comprehensive English language website (at www.wpiraq.net/english), which includes regular PDF newsletters detailing the struggles they are involved in.

There is an obvious enormous gulf between anarchists and Leninists but if we leave that aside for this article the WCPI offer a real breath of fresh air in much of the debate around Iraq. Their real efforts to build union and women's organizations in Iraq offer at least an alternative that can be built on. Their recent document "Worker-communism and the Armed Struggle in Iraq: Guerrilla War or Mass Armed Resistance?"⁷ is well worth reading as it tries to sketch out an alternative path to ending the occupation. This acknowledges a need for armed resistance but seeks to "avoid the traditional

guerrilla-style of armed resistance" substituting one which "focuses on mobilizing and leading the population to reclaim various suburbs, villages, towns and cities and bans both US forces and Islamo-ethnocentric militia from entry". Significantly for anarchists one of the reasons they give for this alternative form of resistance is that "It encourages the

population to intervene in running their own affairs. It will embroil the masses in a process, which will raise their awareness."

AN ONGOING STRUGGLE

It has become clear that the occupation in Iraq is not likely to be a short term event but something that is intended to go on for years and even decades. The US military machine is deeply entrenched both in Iraq and in the White House. Ending the occupation will not come about as a result of an anti-war march, no matter how big or any other single event. We need to view the war in Iraq not as a distant event but as part of our own backyard. The fight of Iraqi workers for justice is part of our own fight for justice. And just as we would refuse to accept a struggle led by those who seek only to be an alternative oppressor we should not demand that Iraqi workers switch one oppressor for another. The election this Sunday will change nothing for the better, even if those it brings to power are somewhat hostile to the US occupation. What we need to be doing is to look for and reach out to whatever progressive forces are struggling in Iraq and show solidarity with these. At the end of the day our fight for freedom is a global fight - or it is no fight at all.

- Andrew Flood,
Workers Solidarity Movement (Ireland)

Notes:

1. A picture of them in action is at <http://iraqpictures.blogspot.com/2005/01/soldiers-with-3rd-battalion-21st.html>
2. Reported at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/4168925.stm
3. See www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?SectionID=15&ItemID=6948
4. www.wpiraq.net/english/2004/Basra-popular_entertainer191204.htm
5. See for instance the text of their leaflet announcing demonstrations in England www.wpiraq.net/english/2004/wpiUK-election251204.htm

6. www.wpiraq.net/english/rebwar_call.htm
7. Online at www.wpiraq.net/english/2004/workercommunism-armedstruggle45.htm

Further Notes:

* The course of the Iranian Revolution was briefly charted in the "Zabalaza" article "Religious Fundamentalist Regimes: A Lesson from the Iranian Revolution 1978-1979" online at: www.zabalaza.net/zabfed/zab2.htm#relig

In August 1977, 50 000 poor slum-dwellers successfully resisted their forced removal by police, then in December, police massacred 40 religious protestors and the resentment boiled over into open anger. Strikes and sabotage were on the rise while wages dropped due to an economic downturn. The shah imposed martial law and on "Black Friday", September 8, 1978, troops gunned down thousands of protestors. In response, infuriated workers launched a strike-wave that spread across the country like wildfire. Oil workers struck for 33 days straight, bringing the economy to a dead halt, despite fruitless attempts to send troops into the oil-fields. On December 11, 2-million protestors marched in the capital, Tehran, demanding the ousting of the shah, an end to American imperialism and the arming of the people. Soldiers began to desert. On January 16, 1979, the shah fled to Egypt. In mid-February, there was an insurrection, with air force cadets joining with guerrilla forces - the leftist Organisation of Iranian Peoples' Fedai Guerrillas, or Fedayeen, and the nationalist Mujahedeen - in over-running the military academy, army bases, the parliament, factories, armouries and the TV station. The Pahlavi regime collapsed and Khomeini, who had returned from exile, cobbled together a multi-party provisional government, but the people wanted more.

Women's organisations flourished, peasants started seizing the land and in some places, established communal cultivation councils, strikes were rampant and workers seized control of their workplaces, arranging raw materials, sourcing and sales themselves, even setting prices in the oil industry. A system of grassroots soviets - called "shoras" in Iranian and based on the old factory council idea - sprang up in fields, factories, neighbourhoods, educational institutions and the armed forces. Armed neighbourhood committees - called "komitehs" - based on the old Muslim scholar networks - patrolled residential areas, arrested collaborators, ran people's courts and prisons, and organized demonstrations. It was a true workers' revolution with secular revolutionaries and Muslim workers overthrowing the capitalist state side by side. A May Day march in Tehran drew 1.5-million demonstrators.

The former headquarters of the secret police-controlled official trade union federation was occupied by the unemployed and renamed the Workers' House. The new workerist federation, that replaced the old state one, the All-Iran Workers' Union, declared that its aim was an Iran "free of class oppression" and called for shoras to be "formed by the workers of each factory for their own political and economic needs". But the religious fundamentalist clerics lead by Khomeini were terrified of the power of the working class and haunted by the spectre of the imminent collapse of Iranian capitalism. If it collapsed, they could not reconstitute themselves as the ruling elite in place of the shah and there would be no profits for them to steal from the workers. Three days after the insur-

rection, the provisional government ordered workers back to work, but the strike, shora and komiteh movements just spread.

A month later, the government declared the shoras to be "counter-revolutionary", claiming that their minority bourgeois regime was "the genuine Islamic Revolution". Still the shoras spread, so the regime introduced a law aimed at undermining worker self-management by banning shora involvement in management affairs - while at the same time trying to force class collaboration by insisting that management must be allowed to participate in the shoras. The shora movement peaked in July but then the government offensive, combined with the inexperience of the left, began to take its toll. The National Front, Masses, Fedayeen and both the leftist and Muslim wings of the Mujahedeen all backed the provisional government mistakenly believing that an Iranian clerical-dominated bourgeoisie was better than the imperialist-backed Pahlavi dynasty.

Khomeini founded the fundamentalist Iranian Republican Party (IRP) to squeeze opposition parties out of the provisional government and at the same time established the Revolutionary Guards (Pasdaran), a political police force to marginalize the secular left within the komitehs, which it wanted to mobilise as a supporter bloc. The Pasdaran were soon forcibly liquidating shoras, purging komitehs and repressing ethnic Kurdish separatists and women's organisations, while the Party of God (Hezbollah) was created as a strikebreaking force of thugs. The IRP also created a public works project to divert the energies of the most militant shoras - replacing them with fundamentalist shoras and Islamic Societies - and to rebuild the exploitative capitalist economy (all the while spouting populist and anti-capitalist slogans in the manner of all fascist dictatorships). The true workers' revolution was destroyed and for the Iranian working class, whether secular or Muslim, a long night of living under a new autocratic regime had begun.

The fundamentalist clerical regime had not set them free: it had only produced new forms of capitalist exploitation and police state repression. The lesson of Iran is a basic anarchist one: workers can never trust groups, religious or not, who chant the right revolutionary slogans but whose real aim is class rule.

** The Iraqi workers' movement arose only in the 1920s and 1930s because of the late development of an industrial proletariat centred on the oil industry and was initially dominated by



the Communist Party of Iraq (HCI). The HCI suffered massacres at the hands of the ruling Ba'athist Party in the 1960s, but in 1973, the two parties' leaderships struck a pact. This enraged the HCI youth, about 300 of which broke away from the party in 1976 to form the anarcho-communist Shagila group. Shagila's primary activities were running an underground press and the assassination of Ba'athist security police goons. When the Iranian Revolution broke out, many Shagila militants crossed into Iran illegally to support their sister anarcho-communist organisation there, The Scream of the People, and the shorah and komiteh movement. But both Shagila and The Scream of the People were caught up in the Khomeinist massacres of the Left which were unleashed in 1979 and only a handful escaped into exile with their lives. Those who remained behind, alive, buried their weapons and printing presses. It is believed that a "second-generation" of Shagila militants may be involved in the current uprising, but we have no confirmation of this.

- Source: a Shagila veteran in exile who cannot be named for security reasons.

*** One of the most significant progressive forces to emerge in Iraq in recent years is the Federation of Workers' Councils and Unions of

Iraq (FWCUI), formed in December 2003, and its affiliate, the Unemployed Union of Iraq (UUI), which have spread like wildfire to most main urban centres in Iraq. The FWCUI states that its aim is to form "labour organisations that the workers elect by themselves, without the guardianship or domination from any authority, whether government or party." This explicitly distances it from any form of state/party control, affiliation or co-option. In other words, it is against both boss-friendly yellow unionism, or state-ruled corporatist unionism of the type the imperialist occupation forces have attempted to establish. Its constitution expands on this theme, saying its aim is to "establish councils and directly elected labour unions inside the factories, workshops and enterprises by the workers themselves." It has taken a distinctly anti-chauvanist line, embracing all workers in the territory of Iraq whatever their ethnic origin, nationality, religion, gender or creed. It fights for bread-and-butter issues, but has also demanded unlimited political freedom and the right to strike and industrial action. Most crucially, its constitution states that the "General Conference [of worker delegates] is the highest authority in the federation and is called for assembly every six months" and that the "leading committee" of the federation, elected in secret ballot by the General Conference, is not an executive body but is merely a delegated body, strictly limited to abide "by all resolutions and recommendations of the conference and work for their implementation." This committee can in turn appoint "specialised committees" to deal with certain tasks, but these organs are merely "consultative" and have "limited validities". In other words what we have here is a directly democratic grassroots rank-and-file organisation that is not organised according to the usual top-down "democratic centralist" model in which the union executive controls the membership. Although the FWCUI has no explicit revolutionary goals, the fact that the control is exercised the other way around, makes a good argument for it to be included by anarchist analysts among the rising number of "alternative" and "grassroots" unions in countries as diverse as Mexico and Switzerland, with whom the resurgent revolutionary anarchist, revolutionary syndicalist and anarcho-syndicalist movements have much in common.

- Source: <http://www.uuiiraq.org/>

Further Notes by Michael Schmidt, ZACF (southern Africa)

Southern African Anarchism Online



www.zabalaza.net

Links to local groups, education material, email discussion lists, PDF leaflets for you to distribute etc. etc.

T-SHIRT - R30



Front Says:
Freedom for All: Power to no one and to Everyone. To each, power over her/his own life and no other

Back Says:
Everything for Everyone!
(with ZACF)

Continued from Page 15

The other main difference with the Leninist concept is even more important, as it concerns the aims of each tendency. The Leninist tendency wants the vanguard party to take control of the State once the revolution has been won, as its members are supposed to be the most conscious, the most intelligent, the best able to represent perfectly the interests of the proletariat. The function of the anarchist Political Organisation, instead, is not to conquer State power. Unlike the Leninists, we want the destruction of the State, as we know that political and military power in the hands of a minority in the name of the revolution is exactly what can damage the revolution most.

The taking of political power, or rather the fact that a minority turns itself into a nucleus of professional politicians with the right to take decisions and impose these on the masses, signifies creating the seeds for bureaucratism and counter-revolution. It lays the basis for a return to a society divided into a privileged minority and a huge oppressed and dominated majority.

The goal of the anarchist Organisation is not political power but the building of proletarian popular power from the bottom up, in other words all the power based on the working people collectively through their assemblies and horizontal decision-making bodies.

ANARCHISM AND REVOLUTIONARY ORGANISATION

But Revolutionary Anarchism did not see its programme for homogeneous Organisation expressed only during the time of Bakunin. Apart from the Alliance of Socialist Democracy, other similar groups have at various times tried to emulate the role of the Alliance, groups such as the Dielo Trouda group, formed principally of Russian and Ukrainian anarchists who fought together with the Russian proletariat in the Russian Revolution, which was subsequently transformed by the Bolsheviks into a State-Party dictatorship.

At the end of the 1920s, The Dielo Trouda group published a document which was very important for the international Libertarian Movement, opening a breach between Organised anarchism and the individualist interpretation of anarchism which repudiated the formation of an Organisation of the vanguard. The anti-Organisationalists consisted of those who did not want to make a commitment or be responsible as militants, those who repudiated that revolutionary discipline which, as Nestor Makhno pointed out, is essential for our tasks to be carried out successfully.

These few lines will help us to clear up the question in hand: "without discipline inside the Organisation it is impossible to undertake any serious revolutionary action at all. Without discipline, the revolutionary

vanguard cannot exist, as it would then find itself in total practical disunity and would be unable to identify the tasks of the moment or carry out its role as initiator which the masses expect of it." (Nestor Makhno, "On Revolutionary Discipline")

The Organisational Platform is a document published by the Dielo Trouda Group with the aim of bringing about a General Union of Anarchists, an Organisation of the revolutionary anarchist vanguard. It is a document that sets out the arguments regarding the need for an Organisational structure of this type. Another example of anarchism constituted in a Revolutionary Organisation is that of the Friends of Durruti in Spain during the 1930s, at the time of the Spanish Civil War. The Friends of Durruti were an anarcho-syndicalist group within the CNT who understood the need to form a conscious revolutionary leadership after the CNT began to commit historical errors such as joining the Republic's bourgeois government. The Friends of Durruti, whose name commemorated the revolutionary anarchist Buenaventura Durruti who died in combat on 20th November 1936, realized that in the circumstances of the time it was urgently necessary to create a nucleus which would be able to indicate the correct positions for the Spanish proletariat so that it could go back to the strictly collectivist and anti-State positions which had been defended from day one of the Spanish Revolution by Durruti and Ascaso.

CONCLUSIONS

We can summarize by saying that we anarchists of the Bakuninist line are advocates of a specific revolutionary Organisation that participates in the popular movements, seeking to insert our Libertarian Socialist programme in these movements and ensure that they proceed along anti-capitalist lines in order to abolish private ownership of the means of production and create horizontal and assemblyist popular power on the ruins of all that is called political power and the State. An Organisation of this type is what the militants of the "Alianza de los Comunistas Libertarios" want to build and we are working daily towards the social revolution and the emancipation of the world.

 - Alliance of Libertarian Communists (ACL), Mexico, December 2004.

Translated by FdCA, Italy.

<http://www.comunismolibertario.cjb.net>
alianzacomunistalibertaria@yahoo.com.mx

The ACL is numbered among a new wave of "platformist" organisations similar to the ZACF that have sprung up over the past three years in countries as diverse as Argentina, Australia, Costa Rica, Brazil, Russia, Turkey and the USA.

ZACF - WHERE WE STAND

We, the working class, produce the world's wealth. We ought to enjoy the benefits.

We want to abolish the system of capitalism that places wealth and power in the hands of a few, and replace it with workers self-management and socialism. We do not mean the lie called 'socialism' practised in Russia, China, and other police states - the system in those countries was/is no more than another form of capitalism - state capitalism.

We stand for a new society where there will be no bosses or bureaucrats. A society that will be run in a truly democratic way by working people, through federations of community and workplace committees. We want to abolish authoritarian relationships and replace them with control from the bottom up - not the top down.

All the industries, all the means of production and distribution will be commonly owned, and placed under the management of those working in them. Production will be co-ordinated, organised and planned by the federation of elected and recallable workplace and community committees, not for profit but to meet our needs. The guiding principle will be "from each according to ability, to each according to need".

We are opposed to all coercive authority; we believe that the only limit on the freedom of the individual is that their freedom does not interfere with the freedom of others.

We do not ask to be made rulers nor do we intend to seize power "on behalf of the working class". Instead, we hold that socialism can only be created by the mass of ordinary people. Anything less is bound to lead to no more than replacing one set of bosses with another.

We are opposed to the state because it is not neutral, it cannot be made to serve our interests. The structures of the state are only necessary when a minority seeks to rule over the majority. We can create our own structures, which will be open and democratic, to ensure the efficient running of everyday life.

We are proud to be part of the tradition of libertarian socialism, of anarchism. The anarchist movement has taken root in the working class of many countries because it serves our interests - not the interests of the power seekers and professional politicians.

In short we fight for the immediate needs and interests of our class under the existing set up, while seeking to encourage the necessary understanding and activity to overthrow capitalism and its state, and lead to the birth of a free and equal (anarchist) society.

SUPPORT ZANDILE MBARANE, CLASS-WAR PRISONER!

(Anti-Eviction Campaign, Western Cape)

Zandile Mbarane is an activist from Mandela Park, Khayelitsha. That community has, since 1999, been faced with massive eviction battles, orchestrated by both banks and government, working together in a partnership called Servcon. Since the early 1990s, in fact, Mandela Park has been a site of housing struggle, since here housing for poor people was financed by banks on a for-profit basis. The result of the evictions was that from 1999 onwards, whole streets started being cleared of people - particularly pensioners, the disabled and single parents, of which Zandile is one. From the end of 2001 onwards, the people of Mandela Park fought back, re-occupying houses and moving people back into Mandela Park from the areas they have been evicted to.

The success of this struggle led to a campaign of police harassment and repression, which peaked in the end of 2002 / start of 2003. Besides arrests of those deemed to be 'trespassing' in the houses they reoccupied, the state marked 'leaders' of the Mandela Park Anti-Eviction Campaign for harassment. These included Max Ntanyana, who was arrested in September 2002 and released with insane bail conditions that banned him from attending meetings, meeting with evicted persons (in other words, ordinary residents of Mandela Park), etc. Later that year Max was accused of breaking his bail conditions, and then had to operate 'underground', till one night in February 2003 he was snatched from outside his house by men in an unmarked car with darkened windows.

Now remember, this is a community with a long history of struggle, dating back to the days of Apartheid. These kind of tactics of 'disappearance' were used in the 1980s, and some-

times the activists 'disappeared' and were never seen again. So people responded - one of them Zandile. They who had pointed Max out, and detained that person. It turns out that this was an undercover police officer, and activists were then able to force the police to reveal where Max was.

The consequences for Zandile and three other activists were, however, severe: they were arrested in pre-dawn raids and charged with kidnapping. Their trial lasted two years, due to the difficulty in finding lawyers and other factors. For various complicated reasons, Zandile Mbarane has been the only person convicted and sentenced in this trial - she was sentenced to 10 months in jail in February 2005. She now needs our support. Her family is left supporting her two children, and every week they must pay for four taxis each way to go and visit her in jail.

So, ja, can you circulate this info around and maybe we can do some kind of collection for Zandile? Then, her postal address is:

Zandile Mbarane
Prisoner Number: 205587870
Pollsmoor Admissions Centre
Private Bag X4
Tokai
7966
South Africa

The Zabalaza Anarchist Communist Federation (ZACF) is an organisation of revolutionaries from the southern regions of Africa who identify with the communist tradition within Anarchism. The federation is organised around the principles of theoretical and tactical unity, collective responsibility and federalism. Our activities include study and theoretical development, anarchist agitation and propaganda, and participation within the class struggle.

As anarchist-communists, we struggle for a classless, stateless and non-hierarchical society. We envision an international confederation of directly democratic, self-managed communities and workplaces; a society where all markets, exchange value systems and divisions of labour have been abolished and the means of production, distribution and communication are socialised in order to allow for the satisfaction of the needs of everyone, adhering to the communist principle: "From each according to ability, to each according to need."



ZACF CONTACT DETAILS

ZACF FEDERATION SECRETARY

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Email: zabfed@zabalaza.net
Phone: 0881220416 (leave message)

(also for Zabalaza Books publishing, and ZACF township Action Groups)

ZACF INTERNATIONAL SECRETARY

Post: Postnet Suite 153, Private Bag X42, Braamfontein, 2017, Johannesburg, South Africa
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(also for Bikisha Media project, and the Anarchist Black Cross prisoner support)

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